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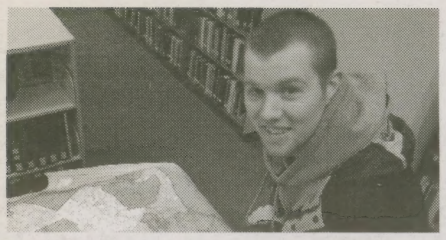

UVic student heads to Africa to fight AIDS
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Xbox 360: Gaming titan or pricey lemon?
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Getting caught under the mistletoe for 58 years.

MARTLET

Thursday, December 1, 2005 | The University of Victoria's Independent Newspaper | www.martlet.ca | Volume 58, Issue 16

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from the Martlet

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTOS | GRAHAM STARK ILLUSTRATION

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Minister dodges citizens at Cathedral Grove meeting

by Kurt Heinrich

In a move reminiscent of a spy novel, B.C. Environment Minister Garry Penner snuck into the back of a Nov. 15 meeting on a controversial plan to bulldoze old-growth trees in Vancouver Island's Cathedral Park and build a pay parking lot.

Penner made an entry into the dark hall in Port Alberni during a PowerPoint presentation and remained for several minutes before ducking out.

The move caught everyone, even his own officials, by surprise, as Penner had earlier claimed that he would be unable to attend the open house meeting.

"Unfortunately, due to difficulty getting out of the [Legistlature]—out of previous commitments here—I was not able to get to the presentation part of the meeting," said Penner, "but I was able to take part, or at least hear some of the comments that the public had to make."

According to Richard Boyce, a filmmaker, activist and member of the Friends of Cathedral Grove, Penner's unannounced cameo at the open house was merely meant to allow the MLA to be able to say, "I was there."

Penner's decision to remain in the shadows is only the latest episode in the Cathedral Grove saga.

The forest has become a bone of contention between environmentalists and the logging industry. In recent years, attempts by American logging giant Weyerhaeuser, which took over MacMillan-Bloedel in 1999, to log the old growth were halted after vehement protests by local residents.

In February 2004, private contractors backed by the B.C. Environment Ministry attempted to start the construction of a large parking lot and adjacent roads to help accommodate the rising traffic levels at the MacMillan Provincial Park.

The loggers were quickly confronted by activists and members of the community, who began a long campaign of "tree sitting," whereby platforms are constructed within the sturdy old-growth trees at heights of up to 120 feet (about 36 metres).

Today, conservationists and activists, such as Maureen Sager of the Alberni Environmental Coalition, point to the ecological importance of the provincial park.

"The area of the proposed and twice-rejected parking lot is the winter range area for an elk herd that is small and in danger," said Sager. The forest also shelters rare Red-legged frogs, as well as a variety of tree species traditionally used by surrounding indigenous bands for cedar bark, canoe timber, planks and totems.

The conservationist's position has the support of a number of municipal governments. Earlier this year a petition signed by over 10,000 citizens and backed by the Mayor of Port Alberni protested the provincial government's plan to build the parking lot.

In response to the petition, the mayors of both Qualicum Beach and Parksville announced their wish for further discussion of alternative plans.

Not everyone, however, is against the provincial plan. "For over 30 years, there has been talk about the risks to public safety due to the current parking lot. No one questions the fact that the parking situation at [Cathedral Grove] is dangerous," Penner said in a press release.

In a recent letter to the Alberni Valley Times, Dewayne Parfitt, the President of the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce agreed: "We respectfully request that the provincial government move now to build a proper parking facility, as planned—a facility able to cope with the increasing number of visitors and truck traffic passing through Cathedral Grove."

For Parfitt and others, the main question is one of security rather than conservation. "Our community is very concerned that it will take a horrific accident to make this new parking lot happen. We hope and pray that this is not the case," Parfitt wrote.

Boyce argues differently. "If safety was so much of an issue, the Ministry of Highways would have made a presentation [at the open house]," said Boyce, who has a different explanation for the provincial government's decision to push ahead with the project despite widespread public disapproval.

For him, it's a question of Liberal stubbornness and the potential for big revenues that is spearheading the controversial proposal. With the swell of summer crowds, thousands of people could potentially use the adjacent parking lot, resulting in more money for government coffers.

Comments on the plan will be accepted until Dec. 9. Individuals and groups interested in reviewing new plans for the area are invited to attend a roundtable discussion and meeting moderated by Alberni-Qualicum MLA Scott Fraser at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre at 7 p.m. on Dec. 6.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Richard Boyce crouches under the claws of a yarder brought into Cathedral Grove Feb. 9, 2003 to clear the way for a parking lot. Continuous protest and tree-sits have prevented logging at the site.

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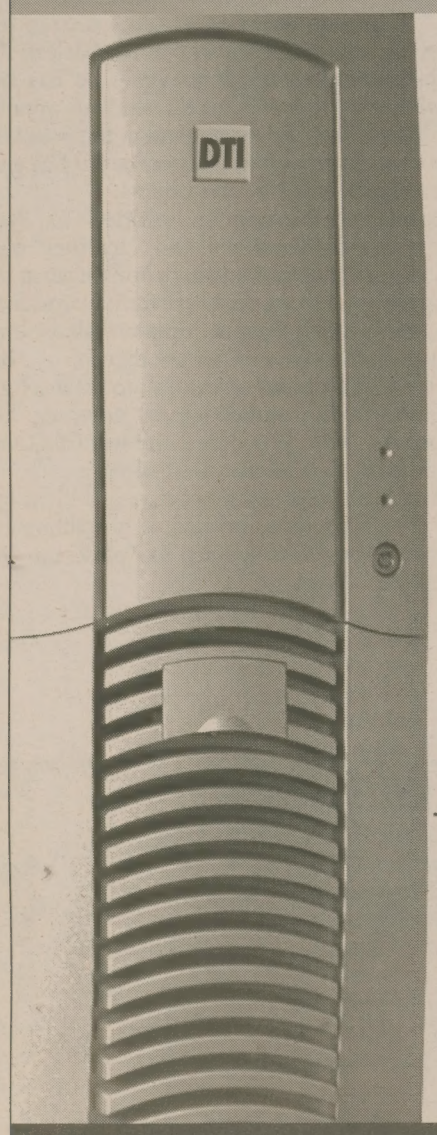

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Army recruiting posters like this one were taken down in the SUB washrooms last spring after the UVSS received complaints. Now, recruiters are being advised not to come to the SUB at all.

Military recruiters kept off campus by UVSS

by Emily Agopsowicz

Military recruiters dropped plans to set up a booth in the Student Union Building (SUB) Nov. 2 after receiving an e-mail from the UVic Students' Society (UVSS) saying that they were not welcome.

"We approached the students' union about setting a booth in their Student Union Building," said HMCS Malahat recruiting officer Acting Sub-Lieut. Kevin Japp. "Initially, the office manager said, 'yes,' that we were approved for a booth."

A day later, on Oct. 20, Japp received an e-mail declining his unit space for a kiosk.

Both UVSS Chair Penny Beames and UVSS General Manager Marne Jensen claim the e-mail that was sent was meant only to advise the recruiters not to come, not to deny them space outright.

"The intention of the letter that we sent [to the recruiters] was never to deny them space, it was merely to advise against them coming, because often if there is resistance it doesn't come to us, it goes straight to the recruiters," said Beames on Nov. 28.

Jensen says the wording of the e-mail was the result of a miscommunication between the UVSS, management and staff.

Military recruitment on campuses was highlighted by an Oct. 6 protest at York University that drove recruiters off campus. Student groups across the country have since drawn up policies to keep recruiters off of their campuses.

"We don't have an official stance on recruiting and we haven't received any real strong opposition [from students]," said Beames.

In fact, Beames says she can only recall one account of protest against military recruiters since becoming involved with the UVSS board in February 2004.

"There was a group on campus that used the presence of recruiters in the SUB to highlight their own campaign," she recalled. "They weren't necessarily protesting the presence of the army recruiters. They were just using the presence of army recruiters to increase the profile of their campaign."

Beames added that although it is not out of the question, she would not expect strong opposition to military recruiters at UVic. She insisted that the UVSS has no plans to bar military recruiters from campus.

"The students' society believes that the students are adults and can make decisions for themselves. If they choose to pass recruiters, that's their decision. If they choose to voice opposition, that's their decision. If they choose to join the army, that's their decision as well. We can't stop them."

Jensen, on the other hand, voices a different opinion on the subject. She refers to past incidents where students had opposed military presence on campus, and says that the UVSS's current stance, if they are approached again, will be to advise recruiters to look for other venues.

"About three years ago during the invasion of Afghanistan," she said, "no one had gotten consulted [about allowing recruiters on campus] and students were upset." She also cited Canadian Army posters in the SUB washrooms last spring that prompted complaints and have since been taken down.

Jensen says the UVSS does not have a "hard and fast" policy on dealing with controversial groups who want space in the SUB, but that she tries to make sensible, case-by-case decisions based on the current climate on campus. In this instance, she says she made her decision after weighing the concerns of UVSS Director of Finance Shamus Reid. "Shamus had a different perspective [than Beames] on that, so I based my judgment on that," she said. "And of course they [recruiters] have the opportunity to place ads in the *Martlet* and other venues on campus."

Meanwhile, recruiters were outside UVic's Centennial Stadium the week after they were scheduled to be in the SUB to recruit during the Canadian Interuniversity Sports (CIS) women's rugby finals, where they reportedly faced no opposition.

Recruiter Petty Officer, 2nd Class Stephen Malcolm says that his experiences recruiting at UVic have been positive. He says student interest and employment opportunities aimed at students is what has kept recruiters coming back to the university. And while he has not personally faced student opposition, he is not blind to the possibility that his presence may not be welcomed by all students.

"Everybody's entitled to their opinions," he said. "It's their own choice. Some people are against the military, some are for it. Some don't really have an opinion whatsoever. In the end, it's another job . . . but we aren't on campus to get in a fight with somebody or anything like that. If people don't want us there then we just don't come."

In the event of strong student opposition, he said, it is military recruiters' policy to "pack up and leave."

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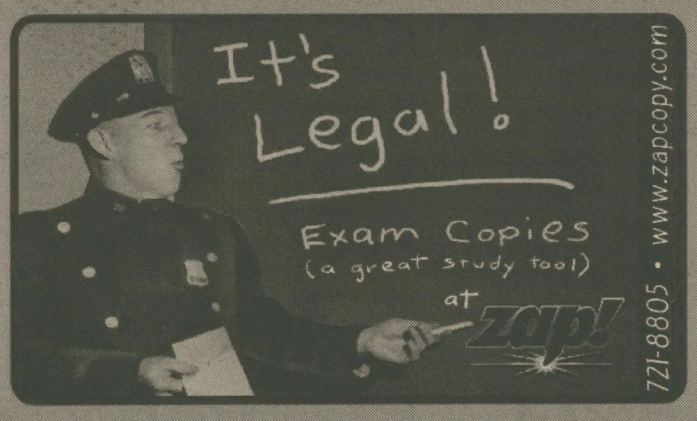

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Oil Free Coast Alliance to government: heed public opinion

by Matthew Gauk

Dozens of UVic students spelled out "Oil Free Coast" in front of the McPherson Library Nov. 22 to protest the possibility of offshore oil drilling in B.C.

The media event was a run-up to the National Day of Action on Nov. 23, organized by the Oil Free Coast Alliance. The Alliance, which includes the Western Canadian Wilderness Committee (WCWC) and the David Suzuki Foundation, aims to increase public awareness of potential oil and gas development off the coast of British Columbia.

A federal government moratorium on offshore drilling was put in place in 1971 by Pierre Trudeau at the behest of David Anderson, then Esquimalt-Saanich MP. The moratorium still stands, but some environmental groups are becoming concerned that the federal government, under pressure from the B.C. government, might start taking steps toward oil and gas exploration. "I think the federal government is just sitting on the fence," said WCWC Victoria campaign director Ken Wu. "We would like some stronger statements that they will maintain the moratorium or, better yet, just have a legislative ban against offshore oil and gas development."

The National Day of Action came a year after the release of the "Priddle Report," a public input process instigated by the federal government to gauge public opinion on offshore drilling. The report found that three-quarters of British Columbians surveyed were opposed to oil and gas development.

"We've given them a year to consider the results of the public input process, so now we want them to commit," said Wu. "We think they should be obligated to adhere to the results of their own public input process."

The biggest concern among those opposed to offshore oil and gas development is the potential environmental impact. Exploration alone, which often involves seismic testing, can cause harm to whales, fish and crabs, according to some studies.

"It basically deafens whales," said Wu. "It can kill the beaked whales; it can drive whales away from their feeding and migration areas, including Orcas and Gray Whales."

The drilling would also threaten the seabird colonies and sea-sponge reefs that make the Queen Charlotte Basin a global treasure, says Jay Ritchlin, the marine campaign strategist for the David Suzuki Foundation.

He fears that small daily leakages and spills of drilling fluids would all go out into the ocean and have an immediate impact within a kilometre of the drill.

While large numbers of animals might not be wiped out from daily leakage, Ritchlin says, it could have a negative influence on developing salmon eggs, and the reproduction of herring, otters, and seabirds.

"It's a really chronic issue that you don't see," said Ritchlin. "More and more we're finding out that the residues from the oil itself have long-term impacts at lower levels."

Wu and Ritchlin agree that the hypothetical fallout wouldn't be limited to the environment. While both acknowledge that an offshore oil and gas industry would bring some economic benefit to the province, they point out that there would be pitfalls as well.

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

Protesters opposed to offshore drilling display their disapproval Nov. 22 in front of UVic's McPherson library. The event was organized by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

"Fishing still employs 16,000 people on the coast, and fish catches are reduced as a result of the destruction of marine larvae," said Wu. "Fish are driven away from huge areas of their feeding and migration routes. This has been shown around the world." Wu also cites possible damage to the $500 million a year worldwide whale-watching industry.

In the 2003 Throne Speech, the provincial government stated that they wanted to have an offshore oil and gas industry up and running by 2010. Since then, the province has created an Offshore Oil and Gas Team to foster the industry. One of their biggest selling points is the creation of jobs to service this industry. "My opinion is that B.C. takes all the risk, and probably most of the economic activity will accrue to large international firms who are already in the global oil market," said Ritchlin.

The National Day of Action saw rallies at 24 locations in 19 Canadian cities. Volunteers leafleted and petitioned passers-by.

"There's a federal election coming up," said Wu. "So of all times where [politicians] need to get in line with public opinion, it's now."

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UVic's best shine at Legacy Awards

PROVIDED PHOTO

Select UVic alumni, faculty and students were recognized Nov. 22.

by Matthew Gauk

The cream of the UVic crop gathered at the Victoria Conference Centre on Nov. 22 in their best penguin outfits for the 2005 Legacy Awards.

The Legacy Awards is an annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of alumni, faculty, students and athletes.

Psychology professor Dr. Martin Smith received the Harry Hickman Award for excellence in teaching. "It's just fabulous, it's just absolutely fabulous," said Smith. "It's one of the high points of my career. You spend a lot of time in the trenches in these sorts of jobs, a lot of foggy November mornings when you go out there and sort of think 'oh gee, another class.' It's wonderful to be recognized."

Smith has spent much of his 15 years at UVic teaching large, introductory courses to psychology. Dealing with classes of as many as 300 students forced Smith to develop some kind of method of remembering all the names. He started by getting a photo of each student, putting them into a computer database, and then working with them on a flash-card basis. The students like the system and feel more committed to the subject matter, according to Smith. "The analogy I sometimes use is that which concert would you rather be at—one with 10 people or one with 3,000 people?" said Smith. "Some people think that 10 people would be neat, but with 3,000 there's an energy there that you can build off."

Smith says some instructors feel that interactivity is limited to small classrooms, but he believes there are other ways to engage with large groups of students. "I make a real effort to ask a lot of questions; to have discussions," he said. "The days of just sitting there and talking are long gone, I think."

The other UVic instructor recognized for his contributions also has a long history of teaching first-year courses. David Clenman, an instructor in the school of music, is known for his unconventional approach to music theory and music history. He received the Gilian Sherwin Award for excellence in teaching.

"It's not just about coming in, giving out grades, answering some questions," said Clenman. "We want to generate some excitement amongst people and inspire them. And they inspire you back."

Clenman says the biggest challenge he faces is that the majority of people take music theory simply because it's required, or perhaps because they think it's an easy course credit. His goal is make students care about the material without boring them.

"So I'll come in dressed as Pythagoras," said Clenman. "In 600 B.C., he was one of the inventors of modern musical theory. I just say that unfortunately the regular instructor couldn't be there, and I was asked to take his place. 'Welcome to Greece.'" Once students get over the shock and make sure they're in the right classroom, they start learning music theory.

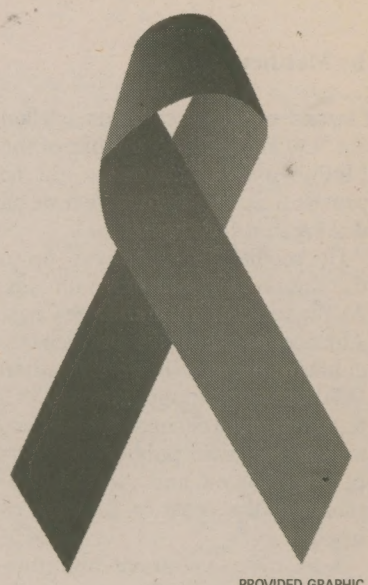
Over the course of the semester, Clenman goes to class in Monk garb and dresses up like Bob Dylan, doing bad voices and everything. "Music doesn't exist in a vacuum," Clenman said. "Think of the protest songs in the 1960s by Bob Dylan. These are things that motivated people to rebel against the status quo."

Other Legacy Award-winners included alumni Richard Flury (BSc Physics 1970), a retired chief executive for British Petroleum, and Eli Pasquale (BA Economics 1985), inducted into the UVic Sports Hall of Fame for his international basketball career.

For a complete list of 2005 award winners, visit http://alumni.uvic.ca/legacyawards/index.htm.

THINGS TO DO FOR WORLD AIDS DAY

Dec. 1 is World AIDS Day, the 18th annual international day of action on HIV and AIDS. Used to create awareness about the real facts surrounding HIV and AIDS, the theme of World AIDS Day 2005 is "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise." Ways to create a more AIDS-aware society include:



PROVIDED GRAPHIC

•Wearing a red ribbon, which shows your support for those living with HIV and AIDS. WUSC will be handing out red ribbons on Dec. 1, so feel free to wear one as a symbol for hope for the future.

•Attending a fund-raiser. A World AIDS Day Benefit Concert, "Rock for Malawi", will be held on Dec. 1 at Felicita's to raise funds for bicycle ambulances to transport bed-ridden people in Malawi to medical facilities. $3 gets you in to hear Yclept, HRP, and Marmaduke.

•Going and viewing the display of 8,000 crosses—one for each daily death from AIDS—in front of the main library at UVic until Dec. 1.

...And for those who want to party for a good cause (or learn more about Working to Empower), contact Logan Cochrane at logan_cochrane@hotmail.com to purchase a $5 ticket to "Get Krunk 4 The Cause: HIV/AIDS East African Refugee Education Christmas Party Fundraiser" at the Red Jacket on Dec. 23.

Correction:

In the Nov. 24 issue of the *Martlet*, a standalone photo of the Wave Venture ran on page 2 with the heading "Project Venus underway".

The caption mistakenly read that the remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) in the picture weighs over 20 tons and is used to dig trenches on the ocean floor for a system of cables and nodes to lie in. In fact, no trenches will be dug in the ocean floor for the VENUS Project (Victoria Experimental Network Under the Sea) and the ROV weighs approximately 6.5 tonnes.

The caption also mistakenly reported that the nodes that will be placed on the Saanich Inlet seabed would send information about tectonic activities to observers above sea level, when in fact there are no tectonic activities in Saanich Inlet.

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The *Martlet* sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience these errors may have caused.

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UVic student off to change the world

by Briony Smith

While many UVic students might not follow through on their idealism, come January fourth-year anthropology student Logan Cochrane will begin a nine-month journey across Sub-Saharan Africa setting up sustainable HIV education programs in eight refugee camps.

How did this person, who says he had "no training in project management and only the most basic knowledge of HIV and AIDS," get to running the non-profit NGO Working to Empower and its HIV/AIDS Refugee Education Program?

It all began with pen pals.

Through the Canadian organization RESPECT International (Refugee Education Sponsorship Program Enhancing Community Together), Cochrane has had many African pen pals over the last three years.

But Working to Empower really began this past June, when Cochrane composed a 23-page HIV education manual geared toward people learning English as a Second Language (ESL) with simple, easy to understand information about HIV and AIDS. The manual was then sent to schools that RESPECT works with in various countries around the world. It also included a request for people to contact Cochrane with ideas on how to make HIV education more culturally palatable.

"I wanted to make HIV education culturally specific, so I encouraged them to contact me so we can work through any issues they have in their area," he said.

The response was overwhelming, as tons of people contacted Cochrane with ideas for him.

"'Well,' I thought, 'I could just go teach this myself,'" he said.

With the help of Tanzanian refugee school director Atuu Waonaje and Congolese founder of Artists for Humanity Dieudonne Amisi Mutambala, he drafted a proposal to create the Working to Empower: HIV/AIDS Refugee Education Program.

Next year, Cochrane will travel to eight refugee camps in three countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, and Benin.

"I didn't choose these countries. These countries chose me," he said.

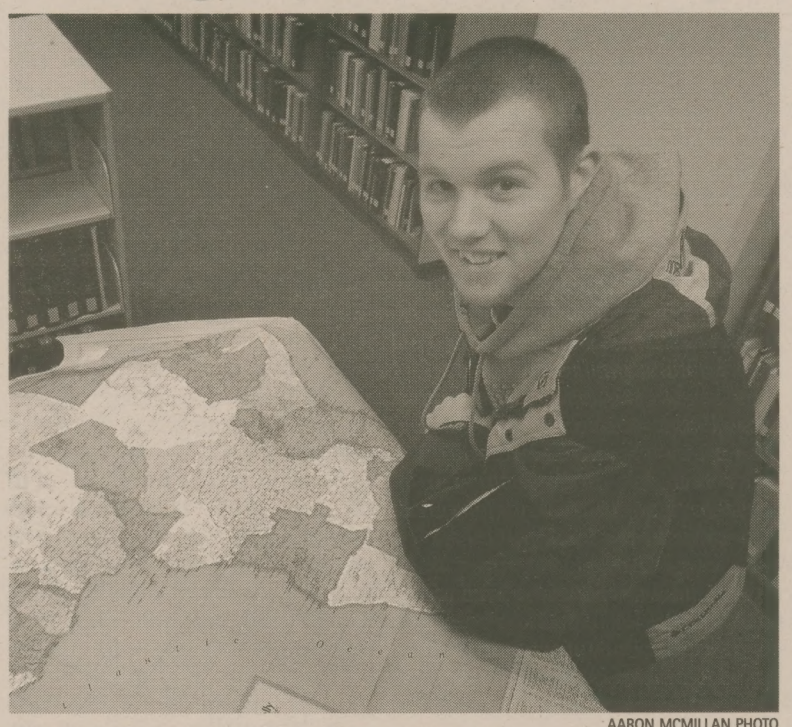
Fifty per cent of the world's HIV infections occur in the region where he will be travelling. As the world's worst affected area, east and central Africa have 12 million orphans of HIV/AIDS victims, and over 2 million AIDS-related deaths annually.

He has chosen to bring his program—which directly involves over 1,000 people—to refugee camps in particular because they constitute the most vulnerable populations, filled with people fleeing from civil war in the DRC, Rwanda, and Northern Uganda.

"These people aren't somehow ignorant or less capable to understand HIV transmission—they've never had the opportunity to go school. They just wonder when they're getting [the] next meal," Cochrane explained. "People out there think that there are so many organizations out there doing so many things for these people, but no one's doing anything."

In the DRC, for example, the UN has a presence for peacekeeping purposes, but not a single organization is there to provide basic health services.

After a four-month stay in Ethiopia to acclimatize himself to the AIDS epidemic through teaching and childcare, Cochrane will spend five weeks in DRC camps in Benin, Baraka, Walikale, Uvira, and Kalemie, where community meeting attendees will receive Cochrane's three-day program, introduced by a local drama focused on information about and experiences with AIDS. The program will also include an AIDS-related musical performance.



AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

UVic student Logan Cochrane will begin a nine-month journey to Africa this January to foster HIV/AIDS education.

Attendees will be fed, both as an incentive to attend and to bring a community feel to the proceedings. This should be a big draw, as government regulations forbid refugee camp residents from farming, ensuring that their only food source is bi-weekly rations from aid organizations like CARE, US Aid, World Vision, and the World Food Program.

"They have no options or control over their lives," Cochran stressed. "Big organizations control who eats, and when they eat."

Cochrane hopes the personalized approach of his program will make it more effective.

"Our program was not designed by some big organization in some office. It was asked for, and constructed out of input given by people living, working, and teaching in these areas. We are culturally appropriate," he said.

Working to Empower is unique in its approach to sustainability. During his six weeks in Tanzania, Cochrane will teach HIV education to 150 participants, who will then become certified HIV educators trained in current local AIDS projects, peace, conflict management, and education.

"Our program is sustainable because instead of me teaching and leaving, I'm teaching and certifying the locals so that they can continue holding the community education meetings into the future, which Working to Empower also plans to fund," he said.

The last segment of his trip will be spent in Benin, where he will observe his trainees teaching to ensure a successful transition from student to teacher.

The desperate need for projects like Cochrane's was recently stated in the UN's latest AIDS report. The UNAIDS/World Health Organization's "AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2005" states that in Sub-Saharan Africa, prevention through education, targeting marginalized groups, and increased involvement by those affected is key, as "knowledge about HIV is inadequate."

Cochrane states that he is confident that people can make a difference in the world if they set their mind to it. "Doing stuff like this isn't for everyone, but it can be done by anyone. I want to get people to get more motivated to do things—not only is it possible for you to make a difference in the world, but it's easy."

In an effort to put his money where his mouth is, Cochrane himself has cashed in his retirement fund and sold his car as part of his fundraising efforts, and, if he should fall short of his required $17,418 mark, says he would gladly go into debt for his program.

"I think that $5,000 in debt is worth a thousand lives," he said.

A year ago, says Cochrane, he got angry at people who had the opportunity to help others, but who do not. But now he knows it is up to them.

"You can live however you want," he said.

In the words of Gandhi, Cochrane himself is living the change he wants to see in the world. And that's a rare thing.

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Vertigo reopens its doors after renovations

by Jessica Earle

Renovations to Vertigo and its surrounding area will address student demands for more eating and social space in the Student Union Building (SUB).

The UVic Students' Society (UVSS) shut down the locale in early November, with the board authorizing the use of $22,000, thanks to the surplus of the UVSS Capital Fund, to clear space in front of Felicita's and put in extra tables and seats for student use.

The recycling and garbage bins, microwaves and free phone have been moved into the area formerly occupied by Vertigo's coat check.

"We did this mostly to improve seating capacity," said SUB general manager Marne Jensen. "There's been a constant demand from students for more casual space within the SUB, and these renovations made room for that."

The space is regularly used for film screenings, discussions and forums, and university clubs are also allowed to reserve the room twice a month at no cost.

Local band The Urge was the first to perform in Vertigo post-renovation on Nov. 26, and while no new bands are currently booked, UVSS director of finance Shamus Reid hopes the newly improved space will become a regular venue for local artists.

Vertigo was originally opened as a nightclub in 1997, and was unofficially closed in 2002 after contributing $300,000 to the $1,000,000 debt the UVSS was facing by that time.

The financial crisis came after an internal audit and criminal investigation found that then-SUB business manager Vivek Sharma had mismanaged funds and was responsible for the loss of $450,000 of UVSS funds.

Sharma pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud in exchange for having charges of theft over $5,000 and causing someone to use a forged document dropped. He served eight months of house arrest, is currently finishing one year of parole, and has been ordered to pay $14,000 in restitution to the UVSS. The UVSS has since dug itself halfway out of debt, leaving it $500,000 in the red.

Reid believes a campus-based nightclub was unlikely to succeed in the first place. "When people go clubbing, they don't want to go to UVic," he said. "They want to go downtown, and get into the nightlife scene down there. Basically, they were only targeting [residence] students, and even they want to get off campus for a night out."

Reid points to a low maximum capacity and a bar layout that creates a bottleneck when people are in line for drinks as other reasons Vertigo was never able to turn a profit.

When the space was re-opened as an all-ages hangout that was open until 10 p.m. for a few nights a week in 2004, Vertigo lost another $5,000, mostly, Jensen said, from poor pizza and non-alcoholic beverage sales. She also said the society has since decided to take Vertigo out of the capital-generating department, and the area is now geared towards student-directed initiatives.

Vertigo continues to be a free space for students to eat and socialize, though Reid said many students aren't aware of its accessibility, and he would like to see the area get more use.

"It looks really good," said Reid. "We've freed up a lot of space, so we should see some benefits from this."

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

UVSS Director of Finance Shamus Reid says November renovations to Vertigo have cleared more space in the SUB for students.

Three cheers for inflatable snowmen!

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

It's that time of year..... Snowmen look happy on Ash Road in Gordon Head Nov. 29.

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Students with disabilities suffer exams in S Hut

by Bryna Hallam

S Hut, a squat grey building on the fringes on campus, began life as part of a military camp. It's now being used as a space for students with disabilities to write exams.

Not everyone is happy with the current incarnation.

"It needs to be demolished," said a second-year psychology student who wished to remain anonymous. "It's really not a good place to write exams." She lists the building's isolated location—it sits on the north corner of campus, near the McKinnon gym—and poor lighting and acoustics as concerns.

Mike Allen-Newman, a second-year computer science and math student, agrees. "I find it very noisy in there," he said.

The noise is especially problematic for students with learning disabilities or ADD/ADHD.

"S-Hut is indeed one of the worst places to put disabled students for exam accommodations," said Scott Antaya, past vice-president of Access UVic, an organization for UVic students with a disability. He also noted that the washrooms are not wheelchair accessible.

"Our university apparently does not care to notice this to be a huge problem," he said.

Antaya also says that the building gets cold in the cooler winter weather, making the rooms "almost unbearable" for students writing exams.

"I am looking forward to the day when the university relocates the disabled students to a much warmer, wheelchair accessible building," he said.

According to Laurie Keenan, coordinator of UVic's Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD), there are currently 500 students, most with invisible disabilities, registered with the centre.

The RCSD schedules more than 2,000 exam accommodations each year for students with disabilities. The accommodations range from using adaptive technology—computers or magnifiers, for example—to having extra time or a quiet space to write exams.

Keenan says the number of students requiring accommodations has increased sharply over the past few years. Space at RCSD was not sufficient to handle all of the exams, and S Hut was renovated to create extra space.

BRYNA HALLAM PHOTO

S Hut, one of the "worst places to put disabled students for exams."

"We were delighted to get that space," said Keenan. "It's better than the four rooms [at the RCSD]."

But she also acknowledges that the space is far from perfect. The majority of complaints she hears have to do with the lack of soundproofing.

"We asked for it to be insulated for noise," she said, "but apparently there wasn't enough money."

Unfortunately, says David Clode, executive director of Student and Ancillary Services, the whole university is strapped for space, and S Hut is the only space available.

"We did the best conversion we could do at the time, but it isn't perfect. It's an old building—there are drawbacks to it," he said. "It's not optimum, but it's what we had."

In addition to the concerns about the suitability of S Hut as an exam centre, members of Access UVic are concerned about the message it sends. Many comments from students point to the indignity of having to write their exams in a building so much worse than any other on campus.

For Access, the underlying issue with S Hut is whether it results in students with disabilities feeling respected and valued.

"We're trying to do the best we can with the resources available," said Clode in response. "I don't think there's any kind of design to try and create indignity."

Bill may violate privacy rights

by Kim Armstrong

A nation-wide surveillance infrastructure implanted in the telephone system sounds like something out of a science fiction movie, but under proposed federal Bill C-74, it could become a reality.

Bill C-74, also known as the Modernization of Investigative Technology Act, was proposed Nov. 15, but has been in the works for some time, according to the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), an independent, nonpartisan charitable organization that works to protect civil liberties in B.C. and Canada.

If passed, Bill C-74 would require telecommunications providers to build surveillance capacity into their systems. This means that although police would still require a warrant to be able to tap into a phone system, once granted a warrant they would have carte blanche access to customer subscriber information, including a person's name, address, IP address, telephone number and cell phone number.

"It's really necessary to maintain the abilities of law enforcement agencies and CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) to protect the public from crimes using new technologies," said Zuwuena Robidas, spokesperson for the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC). She added that there currently is a technological barrier that makes it difficult for law enforcement agencies to tap into the telephone system when they hold a warrant.

Micheal Vonn, policy director for the BCCLA is skeptical.

"It's simply not enough to [say the bill is to] make police work easier. The only place police work is easy is in a police state," she said. "The potential for abuse is terrible. We're exponentially increasing the capacity for surveillance on one hand, and on the other we're lowering the standards [of civil liberties]. . . . It's a very scary proposition."

Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan, who is also Minister of PSEPC, takes no issue with the proposed bill.

"We consulted extensively to ensure this legislation strikes the right balance between the needs of police to maintain their investigative capabilities and the business considerations of the industry, while respecting Canadians' privacy, rights and freedoms."

PSEPC also cites the bill as a way to deal with child pornography and organized cyber crime, but Vonn cautions that the bill is in no way confined to these issues. In addition, she points out that serious cyber crimes are sophisticated, and their perpetrators know what they are doing.

"I don't think a serious cyber criminal is going to be very much inconvenienced by a request for their subscriber information. [Bill C-74] is going to impact ordinary people more than criminals."

Responsibility for the bill has changed hands since it was first introduced.

At one point, it was under the custody of the Department of Justice, but it has since been transferred to PSEPC, which was created in 2003. Vonn sees this as just another attempt to muddy the waters.

"It's shoddy, [and] lacks accountability," she said, adding that parceling the bill into pieces and shunting it through to another ministry is an attempt to make the bill less accessible to the public.

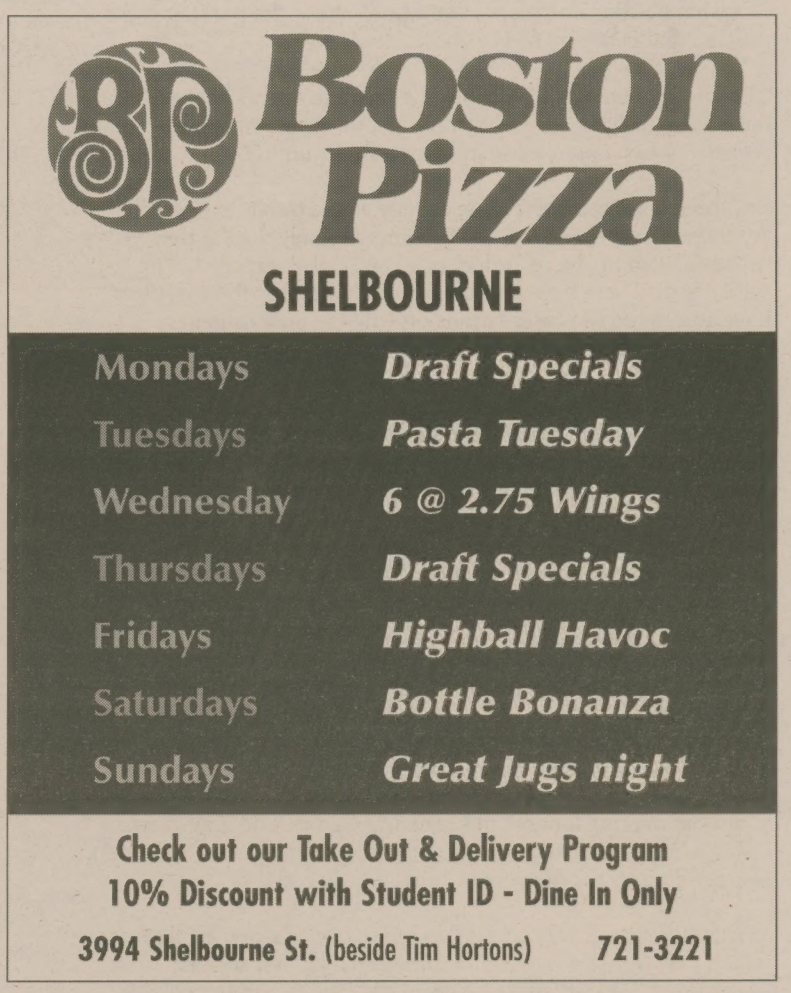
The BCCLA fears that the issue is actually much bigger than Bill C-74. If it passes, they expect to see follow-up bills that will go further in allowing police access to private information and personal movements, including tracking people on their cell phones.

"I don't think we've seen the last of lawful access. It's the first little toe in the door," said Vonn.

Although the upcoming federal election will mean that Bill C-74 will die on the order paper, Vonn says this is by no means the end of the issue.

"Even though it will technically not be operative, we expect it to be back very soon," she said, adding that she would be surprised to see any configuration of the government that would not reintroduce the bill.

"Nobody who has been working on the issue expects it to [end here]. . . . It will be back."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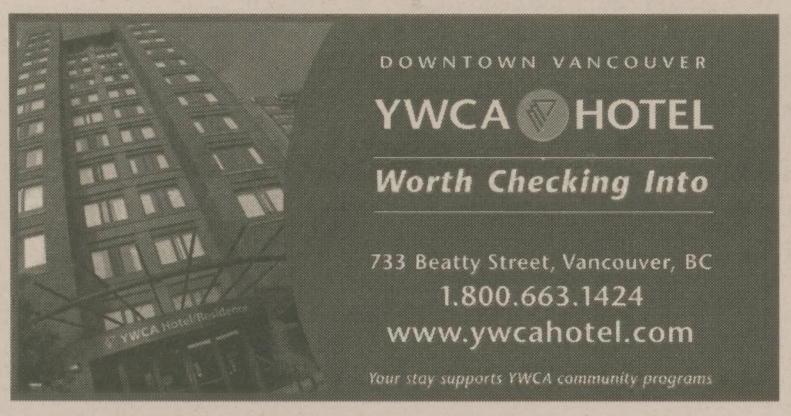

Editorial

Paving paradise

There's massive resistance to the government's plan to pave the forest to put up a parking lot, but it seems that it's going to happen all the same.

For two years, the B.C. Ministry of Environment has been trying to build a new parking lot at the MacMillan Provincial Park—also known as Cathedral Grove—citing the dangerous parking situation along the highway that runs through to the park.

No one disagrees that the current arrangement is unsafe. More than a million tourists visit Cathedral Grove every year. Most of them come in cars, many in giant recreation vehicles. And driving on and off the highway can be a potentially dangerous and tricky feat. However, not everyone agrees that a parking lot is the best solution. Those against the plan would rather see traffic calming measures—a reduced speed limit, for example—that would have a limited impact on the forest itself.

The area is already disturbed and the species that make it home are already vulnerable. Building a parking lot the size of a football field is only going to do more damage. So, for that matter, will the increased numbers of tourists.

There is an irony in the idea of "saving" a bit of old growth forest by making it accessible to visitors—the park's own website reads: "The park's small size and accessibility has left it vulnerable to impacts from high visitor use."

But what has become most contentious about the parking is the process that is being used to choose the site.

The government has 11 options for possible sites. Those options have been available for public review and comment, most recently at two open house meetings in November.

But the meetings haven't gone exactly as the public expected. Attendees have been told that comments made during the meeting wouldn't be recorded, or would only be recorded up until 8 p.m. There have also been complaints that the meetings have amounted to presentations on why the government's favoured plan is the only one that will work.

Environment Minister Barry Penner said he was unable to make a Nov. 15 meeting in Port Alberni—and then showed up unannounced, stuck around for a few minutes and dashed off, leaving everyone to wonder why he even bothered to show-up at all.

The whole public consultation bit sounds like little more than lip service.

This shouldn't surprise anyone, given the government's history of not wanting the public involved in decisions that effect old growth forests.

In February 2004 the B.C. government applied to the Supreme Court for an injunction to prevent the public from entering the proposed parking lot area in Cathedral Grove. The injunction, called a "Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation" (SLAPP), was rejected by the Supreme Court in May 2004.

In that decision, it was noted, "an injunction is a powerful remedy which may transform a dispute between a citizen and the government into a dispute between the citizen and the court," which was exactly what happened when a SLAPP was used against anti-logging protesters in Clayoquot Sound in the early 1990s—the injunctions resulted in over 850 arrests.

It could still happen in Cathedral Grove. Once the government makes their decision and wants to start work on the parking lot, the protestors—there's currently a group "tree-sitting" on platforms 50 metres off the ground—are going to be in the way. Chances are good that the court will reconsider its position on using a SLAPP if there seems to be no other way to move things along.

A SLAPP often arises from communications or protests to the government on issues of public concern such as the mismanagement of public land. The use of SLAPPs makes a mockery of claims that provincial park stewardship is open and publicly accountable, and stifles freedom of speech.

But having meetings and consultations that purport to give the public an opportunity to speak their minds while really maintaining the status quo doesn't serve the public—or the forest—any better.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

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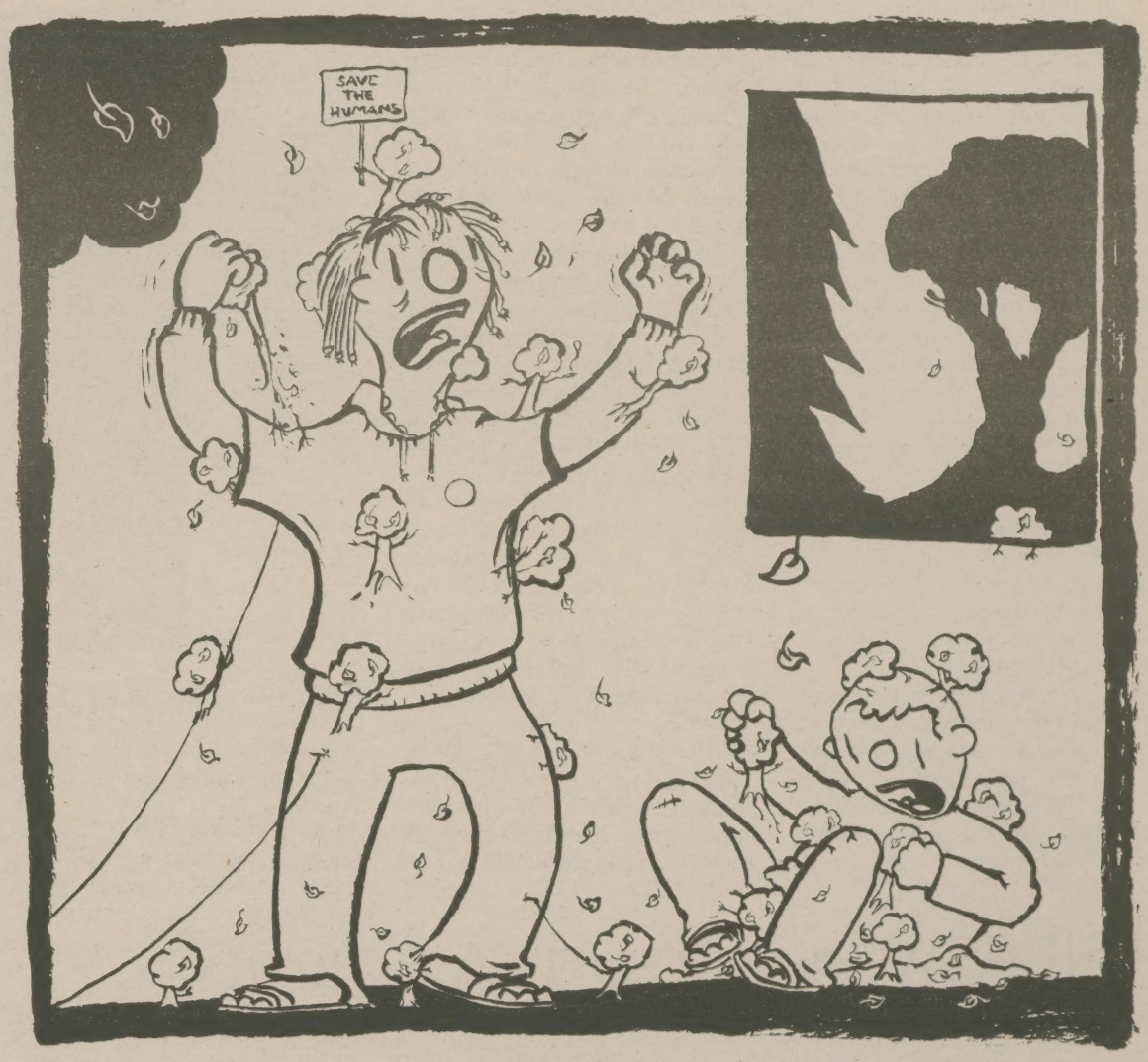
EDITORIAL CARTOON | OH, HOW THE TABLES HAVE TURNED



ANTHONY FRATTAROLI GRAPHIC

Consumerism and conscience

Maybe, just maybe, Christmas means a little bit more

by Erik Haensel

It's that time of the year again—Christmas, a particularly special spiritual day for two religions: Christianity and consumerism. For most of North American society this special season speaks of Boxing xDay sales as much as family togetherness. Wouldn't Jesus be proud!

Ah yes, Christmas, a world of firsts for children: first bicycle, first plastic gun, first time you were made to feel like an outsider in class because you didn't believe in the right God. Yes, it is many things to many people.

And then there are those pesky loudmouth, lefty activists who always arrive to drop downers on this gluttonous moment of self-satisfying gift-giving. It is about giving, after all.

Last week the *Martlet* imported a poignantly poetic, yet logically shallow, diatribe by Waterloo writer Mark Ciesluk, who attacked Buy Nothing Day (Nov. 25) as "shallow and ultimately selfish." The week before, our esteemed *Martlet* managing editor Norman Ed Baskerville commented on the inevitable capitulation of Canadians to the oil exploitation drive in Alberta. For Baskerville, the most important question is how will we divide up the spoils.

Both these writers, cunning and witty in their own right, have misunderstood as much about capitalism as they have about conscious consumption. Ciesluk gets off on condemning the simplicity of Buy Nothing Day while offering no deep thoughts of his own, while Baskerville, on the other hand, seems to buy into the inevitability of oil, because in spite of how much we like Kyoto, it's cheap. To both these writers I put the question: is there such thing as human agency?

The answer for both seems to be a resounding, yet unacknowledged and dare I say unrecognized, no! This is exactly what Buy Nothing Day is about. Call it leftist, anarchist, selfish, whatever you want, but recognize that at its core it is a challenge to our society's requirement of a cheap and consistent supply of consumer fixes.

We have lost control of our ability to moderate our purse-stings and bring them in line with our professed respect for human rights. This is a serious matter, for humbling as it may be, we North Americans have rigged the global economic system so well that we can impact the world more through purchasing than we can through producing.

When you buy, you vote, and we here in North America have a lot more votes per person than the rest of the world. Lucky for us, organizations such as the World Bank are ensuring that local governments do not get in the way of the triumph of North American self-interest: Banana farms are built on the burnt civilizations of Central American societies, local pickers are paid just enough to purchase food and pay rent on the land their families tilled for centuries.

While the so-called left and right throw stones at each other, many regular people struggle every day to make smart purchases, establish new trading relationships that defy the logic of the fast and cheap, and explore the possibility of fair and environmentally sensitive business relationships: you may, for instance, notice fair trade bananas at your local grocery store.

But they are up against a huge problem: exploitation is cheap, at least in the short term. Whether it is strip mining in South Africa, oil drilling in Alberta or Alaska, or sweatshops in El Salvador, our current capitalist structure privileges patterns of production that tear the heart out of any resource rather than develop sustainable relationships of production and trade.

Welcome to the institutionalized logic of this horror we call global civilization. All the while we revel in the warm green and red fuzzy fucking holiday we call Christmas.

What does any of this have to do with the myth of a man who challenged authority and social norms to call for basic human rights for all people? Well, actually, absolutely nothing!

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Suffering from Liberal heartburn

'In Paul Martin's Canada, public money follows the votes'

by Dan Ben-Aron

I believe in health care, public education, and conservatively progressive social policies. The polls tell me that like most Canadians, this means I believe in the Liberal party.

Just like most Canadians, I would prefer to throw myself into political cruise control during the upcoming election, and enjoy my holiday tidings and good cheer, thank you very much—and if not for my ongoing bout of political indigestion, that is exactly what I would do.

The problem, for me, is I suffer from occasional bouts of Liberal heartburn. Like most cases of heartburn, my most recent pains have been caused by overindulgence. The Liberal party's most recent round of "pre" election spending has been the icing on top of the foot-long chilidog. Rather than showing a modicum of shame in the face of ongoing charges of self-interested insider dealing, patronage, and corruption, Paul Martin's Liberals have been spending like it's going out of style—and maybe it is.

But this is Canada after all, and times are good. What's the misappropriation of a couple hundred million dollars to a country experiencing its lowest rates of unemployment in nearly 30 years? Integrity is nice, but it doesn't bring home the Christmas ham.

In another country, in another time, and in another place, perhaps the outright robbery of public funds would cause heads to roll. But we love our Liberals, and like our favourite nephew who steals the box of Christmas chocolates before the family can have any, we can forgive the minor transgression of those we love.

However, instead of returning the candy, Martin's solution is to buy our affection with it. It's no secret that the Liberals have been using the cash windfall of oil revenues to buy Canadian votes.

Whether it's a new coastguard ship bought to appease the potentially winnable riding of Happy Valley Goose Bay, or a middle-class tax break, public money is buying Liberal votes.

Instead of using what little political capital they have in this ill-fated term to propose innovative ideas, the Liberals have relied on band-aid solutions to pressing national problems.

Health care is a good example of their slick governing methods. It has been the Liberal's golden goose. Rather than debating potential solutions for health care, such as the merits of private/public partnerships, the Liberals have opted to take the "cheap" way out, politically speaking.

Instead of engaging in a honest debate over the future of the most valued of Canadian social-service institutions, the Liberals have used health care as a political tool to brand their party, while simultaneously casting the Conservatives as harbingers of a dark era of American-style health care. In political terms, Martin's decision to drop $41 billion into health care provides a short-term solution. But like most of his solutions, this is not a long-term answer.

This is how the Martin logic works—buy now, pay later.

The most galling example of Martin's self-interested politicking is his on-again-off-again love affair with U2's lead singer, Bono. Not a political neophyte, Bono was initially attracted to Martin's stated position on Third World debt relief, and appeared at the 2003 Liberal convention in support of Martin. The Liberals reaped the political rewards of the mega-star's patronage, and basked in his unique brand of aging-rocker cool.

But when it came time to pay the piper at the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Martin cried poor and refused to commit to increasing Canada's foreign aid contributions to 0.7 per cent of the GDP. Bono was in Ottawa Nov. 25 to press Martin to make these commitments, and reportedly was "mystified" by Martin's refusals to do so.

Obviously, Bono's not a Canadian. If he were, he would know that in Martin's Canada, public money follows the votes. Since Africans dying of AIDS can't vote Liberal, the money goes elsewhere.

Martin's continual cries of the government's state of poverty are particularly egregious given his domestic shopping spree. It underlies his commitment to power at any cost, and his willingness to use any means necessary—even alliances with aging Irish rock stars.

Painting the town red and green

Buying and owning are some of our favourite pastimes—why not include them in Christmas?

by Micah Luxen

If I hear "I can't believe how early the holiday season started this year" one more time, I'm going to deck somebody into the halls.

It's not earlier this year—it wasn't earlier last year. Every year, it starts at exactly the same time—the holidays kick off with the American Thanksgiving. Now you know, so next year you won't be surprised.

And every year it seems that more people are bothered by the materialistic nature of the holidays. But in the modern era when tragedies of every kind are everyday occurrences, we should take every opportunity to paint the town red and green for any and every festive circumstance that happens to cross our path.

Why downplay the importance of celebration for celebration's sake, especially when it's a time in which almost everyone is experiencing warm fuzzy feelings—a very improbable anomaly for humanity. Just why do we keep bringing the cheer every year?

Fortunately, we're slaves to tradition. Doing something purely because we've always done it may sound trite and robotic, but fun-factor-wise it works to our advantage—I can't see many people feeling inclined to make sweet cookies and cover the house in tinsel on a whim.

The holidays remind us that life's not just about work, hurricanes and politics, but about making merry too.

Besides, the consumption and accumulation of stuff is not a new phenomenon. Sure we're a culture of waste and excess, but unless people suddenly evolve into a different species, there's no evidence to suggest that we will ever change. We buy stuff all year long. And if buying and owning are some of our favourite pastimes, why not include them in our favourite time of year?

OK, we're shallow because paper-wrapped presents make our little faces light up. Well, Easter, graduations, and birthdays include gift giving too. Why isn't anyone down on birthdays? Aren't birthdays just as commercial?

The highlight of a birthday party is always the surprise in the brightly coloured box. I certainly don't feel the warm fuzzies at having survived another 12 months. Is Seinfeld right? Is the true meaning of birthdays just not having died for another year? Congratulations, you've done great!

No, birthdays, like Christmas, are very materialistic but I've never heard anyone boycotting birthdays—and by the way, I can't believe how early my birthday came this year.

In any case, it's not like we've traded in family bonding and religious values for the sake of mere presents. We've included it all in a great big holiday package. I agree that by focusing on material gains for ourselves, we often forget how it affects the environment and the socio-economically less fortunate, but that is not so much a Christmas issue as it is an all-year-round issue.

So, if we're gonna let each other buy a new backpack manufactured by under-paid children, and eat bananas from the exploited developing nations, don't fuss over purchases made during the holiday season.

Instead, bite at the root of society's obsession for material goods throughout the year, because people aren't going to give it up during the holiday of indulgences.

We buy stuff for each other and derogatorily call it commercialism—but it's our way of including the things we love into our favourite time of year.

What's a Canadian? I'm an un-American

An Exhortation to Seize Canada and Free Her from the Barbarians

by Matthew Gauk

The gossamer threads holding the fabric of Canadian nationality together are preserved by, like it or not, the culture and economy of the United States. Radical anti-Americanism aside, all good things must come to an end and the current Pax (or Pox?) Americana will have its day of reckoning.

Maybe it's wishful thinking, maybe it's wilful ignorance, but something is needed, and soon, to splash a little cold water on the sleepy face of Johnny Canuck. Admit it, you wince when a talk-show host makes a crack about polite ol' Canada. Worse than that, your heart does a little somersault when you hear Canada mentioned for something negative in international news. Canada's inferiority complex is well documented.

We hug the border with our neighbour, and even if he (I don't think I'm off the mark in making the U.S. masculine) doesn't hug back, we await any and all signs of affection with arms wide open and eyes wide shut.

We import our culture right alongside our watermelons. It streams through the air, floats over the 49th parallel and through our cable distributor into our televisions. It gets printed out in books, and in reprints of their magazines, which are dutifully labelled "Canadian Edition." *The Red Green Show* does not constitute culture, and the talent that we create disappears faster than you can pull out a money clip full of American greenbacks and a dual-citizenship application.

The way we live our lives is dictated by the wants and needs and surreal eccentricities of those wacky, freedom-loving cowboys on our southern border who we so love to pigeonhole.

Our economy is in the same boat. In an ironic twist of fate, we have a well-developed environmental lobby decrying the damage done to our country by the very mechanism that keeps our nation economically vital and affluent: resource-extraction. Save the country, kill the nation. Save the nation, kill the country.

It may be argued that the means of this resource extraction, as well as the means of commercial production and the service industry, are increasingly concentrated in American hands. Tim Hortons is but one examples of globalization's effect on homegrown corporations tied to nationhood. Whether this is a good or bad thing is beside the point.

For our service as a breadbasket of grain, lumber, steel, and comedians, we are afforded shelter from the raging storm of real-world economics.

So what's wrong with Canada leaning a little bit too hard on Uncle Sam? Well, nothing is wrong with it if we are able to redirect our interests as circumstance demands. But American hegemony has been so ingrained in our nationalism (Canadian? What's a Canadian? I'm an un-American.) since the transfer from Britain that we have long since lost our ability to make our way over to another parent-state or stand on our own two feet. The decline and fall of the American empire is inevitable. Open up a history book if you don't believe me.

It may peter off into the twilight and become a middle-of-the-road, compromising, and reasonable power, or it may implode in a painfully poignant reversal of manifest destiny. Sooner or later, though, Canadians are going to be forced to identify themselves not as un-American, but as non-Americans, and this is the issue that will define the next generation.

From Camp to Campus

Student refugee finds home at UVic

ASHLEY AIKINS PHOTO | GRAHAM STARK ILLUSTRATION

by Ashley Akins

In the spring of 2005, I was one of a group of 15 Canadian University of Victoria students, most of whom had never set foot in Africa, that decided the fate of two Sudanese refugees. As we made our decision, raids were sweeping through Southern Sudan.

One applicant would be given the opportunity to exchange the insecurities of the Kakuma refugee camp for a chance to study at UVic, while we would probably never hear from the other again. The only material we had to base our decision on were two thin dossiers containing biographies, English language scores, letters of interest, references and high school grades.

What a superficial process, it seemed, for such a vital decision. As we weighed the criteria, the driving force of the debate came down to their degree of need. Three of us yelled at each other, as there was no one else there to blame, and one student walked out in the middle of the process because it was too "unethical." In the end, it nearly came down to the flip of a coin—it just seemed so wrong for us to be playing God.

And yet the process was better than any alternative. The choice could have been made by a Microsoft random-selection program or by Ottawa bureaucrats, but the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) gave us the opportunity to serve as UVic's selection committee for its Student Refugee Program, so there was no way we could flip a coin.

"Who would know better who would fit in our university than us, who are students here?" said the Student Refugee Program logistics co-ordinator and member of the selection committee, Kristen Holten, after the process was over. "Really it's the best way, but it's still an awful way."

When Jok Gai stepped off the plane at the Vancouver International Airport this September, he carried only two suitcases. One held a couple pairs of pants, a sweater, and four decorative Sudanese beaded balls; the other was stuffed with matching buttermilk-coloured pillow shams, upholstery covers, and bed sheets—traditional gifts embroidered by the women of his community.

ASHLEY AIKINS PHOTO

"When we left Sudan and came to Kenya, it's not easy to carry things with you," said Gai. "You're running just to save your own life. You only have the clothes on you."

Holten and Ashley Heaslip, president of WUSC UVic, waited in the airport with such pent-up emotion that they cried when they saw Gai come off the plane. Other than bets on his height, they had no idea what to expect.

"I thought he'd be really tall," said Heaslip with a laugh. "We had bets. I thought he'd be 6-foot-6 and Kristen thought he'd be 7-foot-4."

Gai, known as "Manyaai," which means "the little one" in Kiswahili, is only 5-foot-9. Yet within his small frame, he brought a smile and a story greater than any bestselling fiction novel.

"Jok's smile was just real happiness," said Heaslip. "I always wonder how [refugees] can be so resilient. I don't think you can truly understand that resilience unless you've been through something similar."

Gai had been running since he was 10 years old, when the Sudanese civil war spread to his village and left him orphaned. Now 25, and after a decade of living in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, he no longer has to run.

"There's so many people who have the brains but just not the chance. They're stuck."
- Jok Gai

Thanks to the Student Refugee Program (SRP), which gives young refugees the opportunity to study at Canadian universities, all Gai has to worry about now is culture shock and exams. But he is one of the lucky few—and he barely made it. The cut-off age for the program is 25, and due to a lack of funding, UVic only accepts one student refugee every second year. UVic administration has pledged an annual contribution of $10,000 to the program, which WUSC members hope will kick start UVic's role as a global ambassador.

SRP, a project of WUSC, a student organization committed to human rights and global change, has sponsored about 45 students each year since 1978. The program gives refugees the opportunity to resettle in Canada as landed immigrants in order to pursue a university education. Though many of the refugees sponsored through the SRP come from Kakuma, WUSC representatives also focus on camps in Malawi and Thailand that shelter refugees from Africa, Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. Most of the world's 15 million refugees come from these regions.

"Get as many people out of [the camp] as you can," said Gai. "As long as they're here, they'll be happy."

NO PLACE TO CALL HOME

Though Gai came to the Kakuma refugee camp from southern Sudan to find safety and security, he found nothing more than entrapment, halting at 14 years of age any future plans he might have preserved through willpower.

"I miss the people I left behind," said Gai. "But the refugee camp is a horrible place. I cannot remember anything good there."

Kakuma, a camp run by the United Nations Refugee Agency, is home to over 90,000 refugees from nine countries in eastern Africa. Each year 300 students graduate from its five secondary schools, but there are no opportunities for post-secondary education and few chances for employment. While WUSC and other small organizations sponsor about 25 students from Kakuma a year to pursue further education, over 3,000 of Kakuma's high school graduates—its first graduating class was in 1994—have no choice but to live and die within the boundaries of the camp. Gai says 18 hours each day are spent awake doing nothing, as refugees are not permitted to work or seek education beyond Kakuma's borders.

"There's so many people who have the brains but just not the chance," said Gai. "They're stuck."

Living conditions aren't luxurious by any means, according to "Kakuma: A Troubled Refugee Camp in Kenya," published by Refugees International. While Kakuma resembles a small city and many refugees have established Internet and business facilities in the camp by smuggling purchases from the nearby city of Nairobi, it barely provides basic needs. Houses are built from palm fronds and beds are nothing more than mats on dirt floors. Food rations consist of two kilograms of maize, beans, oil, and salt every two weeks.

"Most houses only have one meal a day," said Gai. "If you have a lunch and dinner, you'll run out in four days. For a week, you'll have nothing."

Except for a few small, congested hospitals that don't provide any drugs to aid recovery, there are no proper medical facilities in the camp, says Gai. Those who try to seek help in Nairobi run the risk of encountering Kenyan militia, who insist that refugees stay within the camp's borders. Even when Gai contracted malaria, he didn't seek medical attention. He just waited it out.

"They're only sustaining you to keep you going," he said. "Not to keep you healthy or comfortable."

But even staying alive becomes a battle when rivalry between the local communities and refugees escalate. Because the refugee community in northern Kenya outnumbers the local community and competition for food and water is fierce, some local inhabitants will raid the camp to loot its possessions, rape the women and kill those who cannot escape.

In June 2003, Gai experienced the camp's worst raid, during which 14 of his friends from the Sudanese refugee community were murdered. During the weeklong attack, thousands retreated to one side of the camp to avoid the fighting, causing severe hygiene problems and a major water shortage. While the women, children and elderly hid, the young men returned to their home-turned-battlefield to defend the camp. But, unlike their opponents, they had no guns. Somehow, after building fences around the camp, they succeeded in discouraging the locals from continuing the fight.

"You'd take long sticks or knives. It's like suicide," said Gai. "They could still shoot us, but they feared coming through [the fences] because someone would slice their necks."

Though that large raid has died down, there are still numerous small attacks, and Gai says it's normal to see people late at night who have been shot and killed.

"It's no different from where we came from—from Sudan," said Gai. "It's not a safe refugee camp. Some people even want to go back to their countries of origin."

ESCAPING THE NILE

For Gai, Sudan holds nothing but childhood memories of swimming in the Nile and bittersweet, blurred images of his family of eight, which is now down to three. After witnessing the murder of his parents during a military raid when he was 10, he fled the southern Sudanese village of Bor with no finish line in

sight. Gradually the hundreds who had begun running with him were picked off, until those remaining from his first escape could be counted on a single hand. Some ran in different directions and others simply didn't make it. Gai later discovered that two of his brothers were among the unlucky ones.

"Some get exhausted and decide to sit and die. You keep running if you're strong," said Gai.

But the raid that forced him to flee his burning village was only one of many during Sudan's 20-year second civil war.

Since 1983, the ongoing racial conflict has displaced over four million southern Sudanese and killed two million, according to an article on GlobalSecurity.org. The war rages between Arab Islamic government forces in the North and African Christian rebels in the South. The goal of northern Sudan and their Islamization campaign is to govern the country by Shariah Law, while the South want freedom of thought and religion. Gai adds that many southerners fight for their independence, as they see this as the only way to maintain peace. In January 2005, bowing to pressure from the international community, the Sudanese government signed a peace agreement, but according to Gai, this doesn't provide much hope. In 1988, a similar cease-fire agreement was signed, only to break down one year later.

Gradually the hundreds who had begun running with him were picked off, until those remaining from his first escape could be counted on a single hand.

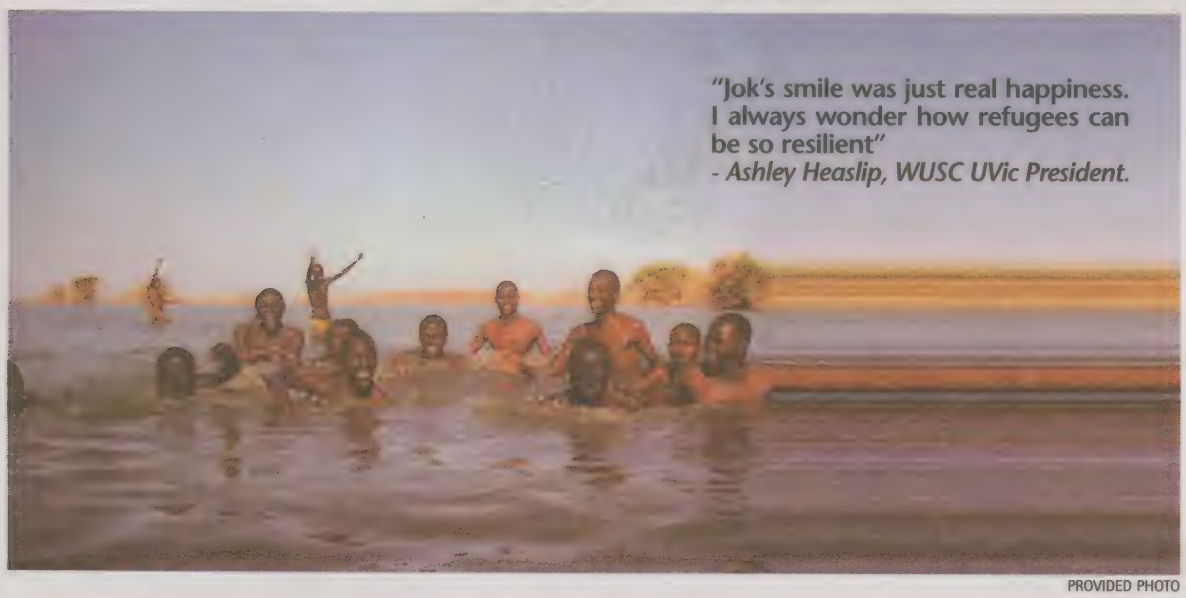
Gai hasn't been back to Sudan since he returned to search for his brother and sister in 2003, after losing contact with them during the raid in 1990. He was able to locate them from Kakuma using radio calls, but his attempt to reach them was stymied by a lack of adequate transportation within Sudan. He only knows that he is the uncle of seven nieces and nephews whom he will probably never meet.

"You just forget about it and live your own life," he said, thinking back to the raid that caused his parents' deaths. "Of course, it was horrible at the time . . . but (death) is so normal."

EDUCATION IS EMPOWERING

The slogan, "Education is Empowering" screams out in red and black across the messy banners taped to the McPherson Library's brick wall. It seems that this year, the message has finally been painted loud enough. UVic's Student Refugee Program is now partially funded through an annual $10,000 from UVic administration. Until this year, the SRP's only source of funding came from students. Fifty cents per semester from each students' fees—which, over two years, adds up to about $20,000—has funded the student refugee's first year. WUSC hopes to use the additional funding to support at least one student refugee every year, instead of one every two years.

But still, UVic lies at the bottom of Canadian universities in its financial support for the program. UVic funds only the first year of study. After the first semester, the student is expected to find a part-time job and, after the first year, the student receives no financial help. The University of British Columbia sponsors up to four student refugees each year and covers tuition and housing for all four years of study. Simon Fraser University sponsors two students per year, providing both housing and tuition for the students' first year.



"Jok's smile was just real happiness. I always wonder how refugees can be so resilient"
- Ashley Heaslip, WUSC UVic President.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Gai, centre left, and his friends in Lake Turkana, northern Kenya

Two previous sponsored students, Haimanot Eshetie from Ethiopia and Roya Atmar from Afghanistan, left UVic after their first year because they couldn't afford to stay. Eshetie transferred to Camosun College where she completed a Resident Care Assistance diploma last year, while Atmar is now studying biotechnology at Carleton University.

UVic's associate academic vice-president and director of international affairs, Jim Anglin, believes UVic needs to focus its attention on this program as it not only benefits the sponsored students, but also enriches the students who study and work with them.

"They are ambassadors for their country and resources for the university," said Anglin. "I don't see this as a one-way situation. I think they give us way more than we give them."

The program is an excellent opportunity for UVic students to gain exposure and get a taste of global issues and cultures, says Heaslip. She remembers when Atmar, who wore an abaya—a traditional headscarf worn by some Islamic women—arrived at UVic on September 13, 2001, just two days after the World Trade Center attacks.

"She was a real live example of the exact opposite that was portrayed in mainstream media," said Heaslip. "There's an image portrayed post-9-11 of Afghanis being terrorists—that's what we were being inundated with. Roya offered the human perspective of the situation in Afghanistan, a glimpse into the majority of the people who want to be peaceful."

When Atmar arrived, she found UVic's first-year classes elementary because of her extensive previous education, but the evaluation of whether the student refugee's educational background will sufficiently prepare them to study at a Canadian university is difficult to judge, as systems vary considerably between countries.

While Atmar's education seemed too advanced, Gai has been struggling with first-year electrical engineering because his high school classes did not teach him the curriculum UVic professors bypass as standard knowledge.

"It's a different system. It's hard to keep pace with the lecture when they assume we already know [the concepts]," said Gai. Another reason he's struggling, he adds, is because of the five-year gap between his high school and university education. He was rejected from the SRP in 2002 and had to put his education on hold.

"Some get exhausted and decide to sit and die. You keep running if you're strong."
- Jok Gai

"My main ambition is to do well in class," he said. "So when I find it difficult, that's frustrating." But Gai stops and smiles. "It's hard, but I have the determination to do it," he said. "I'm not worried. You discover with time, things get better and better."

Gai considers it all easy for him in Victoria.

"We've had very difficult life training. I don't think anything will be worse than what we went through," he said. "Any circumstances I get, I've already expected."

Before the Sudanese civil war interrupted Gai's childhood, the Nile served as his swimming pool. It was a game—making it to the other side without getting eaten.

The first time he tried to swim across, he would have drowned if a boat hadn't rescued him, but eventually the feat became easier and he and his friends would make it to the other side, only to realize they would have to swim back. Sometimes one of the boys would disappear and never return, swallowed by a crocodile or hippopotamus, or the Nile itself.

"It was very dangerous," he said. "But we kept doing it. We were stupid then."

Yet somehow Jok Gai never got caught—he made it to the other side. Every time.

Kakuma refugee camp, home to over 90,000 East African refugees.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Water is sparse: Women line up every third day for a few hours in the morning when water is made available.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Gai built his own house, which he shared with two cousins. He used empty oil cannisters for roofing and mud and sticks for the walls. At four metres by four metres, it was considered big.

PROVIDED PHOTO

One of the communal bathrooms, consisting of a shower and latrine.

A solo show with many voices

Syringa Tree traces South African struggles from the early days of apartheid to the present

What: *The Syringa Tree*, by Pamela Gien
Where: The Belfry Theatre, 1291 Gladstone
When: Nov. 29 to Dec. 18
How much: $15 to $25

by Briony Smith

Carmen Grant has 24 personalities.

As a lone performer acting 24 roles in the Belfry Theatre's production of *The Syringa Tree*, Grant will be facing the biggest challenge an actor can, she says.

"You really come face to face with yourself in a one-person play. It's mentally exhausting, as it's so emotionally charged, but it's also a physical challenge—it's 90 minutes with no water, no intermission."

In addition to the physical rigors of the role, Grant must learn two dozen distinct speaking parts, often swapping personas line by line. The story takes place over four generations, from the early days of apartheid to present-day South Africa, and is told mainly through the eyes of Elizabeth Grace, a six-year-old child who weaves together tales of a black family and a white family. The Obie-award-winning play also contains grains of playwright Pamela Gien's life—the murder of her grandfather, and the birth and concealment of her nanny's child.

In addition to the tough subject matter, the setting ensures a workout for Grant, who jumps between five different accents including high English, English South African, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu, making it easy to see why Gien originally conceived the play in a standard theatrical format—with different actors speaking the parts—before being convinced by her acting coach to perform it alone.

Grant agrees the play works best as a solo show.

"There is a part of each of the characters in you, and a part of you in each character—some of the characters you really like, and some you really don't. But there's a piece of that person inside of me, regardless of age, culture, time, location and politics, which is inspiring."

The shared humanity of these characters, despite surface differences, makes the show accessible to all sorts of people, says Grant.

TIM MATHESON PHOTO

Actor Carmen Grant juggles South African accents in *Syringa*.

"While it's set in a very specific place and time, it resonates with people because they can see pieces of themselves onstage. It's a spiritual thing—no matter who you are or where you come from, you can relate to the basic human elements that connect us."

Despite these connections, Grant was nervous at the reaction a white person playing persons of colour might elicit during her first run of the play at the Neptune Theatre in Halifax, a city with a large African population.

"One night, a South African woman waited for me after the show. I thought, 'Oh, no, now I'm gonna get it,' but then she came up to me with tears streaming down her face, hugging me, and singing the same songs I sing in the play. She was Xhosa, and seeing her joy, I felt relief."

Grant's previous experience with the play has also allowed her to explore the role's nuances.

"It has moved deep into my psyche, allowing me to 'subtle' things up a bit," she says.

"And while it's incredibly challenging, it's also incredibly gratifying. And the audience feels that, too. Despite the setting in such a dark time in history, *The Syringa Tree* is an affirmative piece that makes you leave the theatre with a real sense of joy and love."

Baritone Gregory Dahl adds an operatic tone to Handel's *Messiah*

Who: Handel's *Messiah*, performed by The Victoria Symphony
Where: Royal Theatre, 805 Broughton
When: Dec. 16 and 17 @ 8 p.m.
How much: $20, $9.75 for Student Rush members

by Micah Luxen

Starlight blankets the child in Bethlehem. Violins weep with the familiar melody, deep baritone voices echo into the night, and the *Messiah* is born.

This is George Friderick Handel's celebratory opus, brought to life this season by the Victoria Symphony.

"For me," says baritone Gregory Dahl, "*Messiah* has become one of those pieces that represents that total Christmas spirit. . . . The music has not changed at all since it was written."

In 1742, Handel composed his Baroque masterpiece for a charitable benefit, raising £400 and freeing 142 men from debtor's prison. A year later, the King of England attended a performance in London. As the story goes, the king rose as he heard the first notes of the victorious Hallelujah chorus.

The entire audience then stood, initiating the tradition that continues to this day.

"It spoke to the people back then, and it speaks to the people now," says Dahl. "When music is written from the heart or the soul, and it's sung and received in that way, people just love it, and it stands the test of time."

This holiday season, *Messiah* is directed by Tania Miller and features four soloists—including Dahl, Jennie Such, Marie Anne Kowan, and Colin Balzer—the Victoria Choral Society, as well as the musicians of the Victoria Symphony. The holiday oratorio combines an operatic tone with the drama of the most experienced of musical storytellers without any moving action on stage.

"Why is it specifically so beautiful?" says Dahl. "I think it's just well written, and it takes you on a great journey. It's all based on the Bible."

Dahl, who works primarily in opera, enjoys returning to the Messiah every December.

"It conjures up memories from the past about Christmas, but that's why it is done every year. As a performer, you sing many types of music, and I've grown as a performer so I'm able to bring different things to this music every time."

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CBC Radio 3 moves from podcast to satellite

The emerging station, which showcases lesser-known artists, will soon be launched on satellite radio

by Cassidy Nunn

CBC Radio 3 is about to get Sirius. The number one podcast in Canada is preparing to go global, riding on the satellite waves of Sirius, a nation-wide satellite radio provider. The new station promises to play 100 per cent commercial-free music, 24 hours a day.

For the uninitiated, podcasting is the latest trend in radio, allowing stations to produce downloadable programming that can be uploaded and listened to on MP3 players like iPods.

The Radio 3 podcast has devoted itself to showcasing Canadian music talent that isn't well recognized enough to be played on commercial stations. The show, which up until now has been broadcast Saturday nights on CBC Radio Two, has proven to be popular not only in Canada, but on a more global network, receiving feedback from all over the world. Steve Pratt, director of CBC Radio 3, says the station is "the national voice for Canadian music."

Eighty-five percent of the music to be played on the new station is going to be Canadian content, and the re-launched cbcradio3.com will help foster a connection between geographically divided Canadian musicians.

"There's nothing on a national level for these artists," says Pratt, "so the site's going to help new Canadian artists."

Music, however, will not be the only thing featured on the website. A number of feature stories on topics revolving around Canadian music, which will be hosted by experts in the area, will accompany the playlists.

The CBC strike this past summer had a great affect on the launching of the new site—two months of preparation for the launch were lost.

"We don't even have a hard launch date," says Pratt.

The station is going to be launched in two phases—the first is simply to get it up and running, and the second, which is proposed for the new year, is to fine-tune and make playlists available to the public.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Radio 3 features Canadian groups like Montreal's The Dears, as well as original concert recordings.

Concerts and studio-recorded sessions will also be broadcast in early 2006.

Satellite radio is the new way to discover music, and lots of it. It is new technology, however, and comes with a price tag. The radios themselves are not cheap—ranging from $75 up to $1,000—and then, just like cable TV or an Internet connection, a monthly subscription to the satellite provider must be paid. Satellite subscriptions are approximately $15 per month.

The new station, however, will not rely on subscribers or advertisers for support—it's going to be completely funded by the CBC.

"The satellite launch actually hasn't required any additional funding that CBC Radio 3 didn't have already," says Pratt

The CBC Radio 3 Saturday night podcast has already generated a steady following with over 650,000 downloads of their program thus far. The hope for the station is that the listeners will become subscribers.

"If quality and content are valuable to people, they'll sign up for it," says Pratt.

An advertising campaign promoting the new station is being prepared, but you won't hear about it on CBC Radio, as the station is not allowed to advertise on its sister networks.

"We've had decent press. There was a big article in *the Globe and Mail*," says Pratt, "but we [still] want to raise awareness."

To find more info on CBC Radio 3, check out their website at www.cbcradio3.com

Modern-day minstrels tout a repertoire of medieval folk music

Who: Madd Regaeles' Muse
Where: St. Ann's Academy chapel, 835 Humboldt
When: Sunday, Dec. 4 @ 2 p.m.
How much: $12, call 250-953-8828 for advance tickets

by Deborah Daudin

In Vancouver, they are known for their brand of lively, jovial music and medieval drinking songs. While wearing period costumes, Madd Regaeles' Muse performs "popular" chansons, madrigals, ars nova, Celtic folk and other ditties from Medieval times to the present.

This multilingual, multi-talented group currently consists of Kirsten Maier, Rita Ciammaichella, Alan Sherman and Doug Stepple. Ciammaichella, spokesperson for the group, explains how MRM was formed.

"We were all former members of the Gallery Singers, a well-established Vancouver choir. We discovered a mutual love of early music and together founded Madd Regaeles' Muse, expanding our repertoire to include early folk music of the medieval and renaissance time periods."

With period instruments accompanying the vocal harmonies, MRM's concerts are as fun to watch as they are to listen to. The softly strummed chords of the guitar, mandolin, and dulcimer harmonize well with the birdlike trills of the recorder. The final touch is added by the various percussion instruments that punctuate the melodies, giving the audience a feeling of stepping back in time to the 13th and 14th centuries. When asked about their popularity in the Pacific Northwest, Ciammaichella says that although the opportunities here are fewer and farther between than in Eastern Canada and the United States, there are still demands for this kind of entertainment.

"We have performed at Seattle Folk Life, Mission Folk Festival, and during the pre-show of Bard on the Beach, adding to the Shakespearean atmosphere and experience. We have also been regulars at the Steveston Folk Guild in Richmond, B.C. and Vancouver's annual Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin." Released in 2004, their first CD, *Love, Lust & Libation*, is a mosaic of folk tunes from many European cultures.

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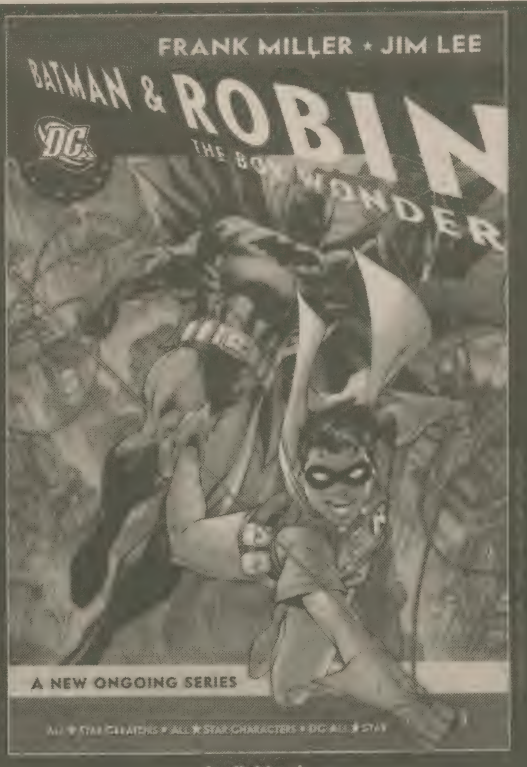

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Trailer trash gets 'interactive'

Two in-character *Trailer Park Boys* visit Victoria, but the actors have their own stories to tell

Who: Mr. Lahey and Randy of Trailer Park Boys
Where: Sugar Nightclub, 858 Yates
When: Saturday, Dec. 3 @ 8 p.m.
How much: $28.50

by Micah Luxen

PROVIDED PHOTO

Pat Roach, left, holds down a full-time job as a regional sales manager for Sparkling Springs.

Two of the strangest characters in the *Trailer Park Boys'* uniformly odd cast, Mr. Lahey (John Dunsworth) and Randy (Pat Roach), are currently touring the country, performing what might be called, for lack of a better word, comedy.

"We're crazy characters, so people get an interactive show with Randy and Mr. Lahey, and [they] also get to know John Dunsworth and Pat Roach when we leave the characters behind in the show a little bit," says an enthusiastic Roach. "You know, we've got the skits we do, contests and things like that."

Crowds across Canada have warmly received the boys, treating them like celebrities and contributing to performances.

"We love audience participation. It surprises them a little bit. I don't like to give too much away, because sometimes a surprise is better. It's an opportunity for you to see what Mr. Lahey and Randy are like together on the show as the assistant manager and trailer-park supervisor, and you get to see how we get along and whatnot."

Roach and Dunsworth are known to use any material from the hit series, and since it's their show, "we could make up anything about the trailer park if we wanted to; whatever's in our minds or whatnot," says Roach. "Sometimes I do eat cheeseburgers [on stage]. It depends on whether or not I'm hungry."

Dressed in character (or "undressed," in Roach's case), the duo is sure to entertain, but the show may not be one for the easily offended.

"Is this an adult only show? You know what? Truthfully, I don't even know," says Roach.

Now in its sixth season on Showcase, *Trailer Park Boys* is notorious for risqué stereotyping, but parents can't keep their kids from watching.

"There's been some younger kids [at the show] who are, like, 14 years old and are huge fans and own all the DVDs and stuff," says Roach. "If it wasn't for our great Canadian fans, we wouldn't be here . . . and it seems like people love the show and love to get the opportunity to meet us [and get] autographs, pictures, all that kind of stuff."

Fans might be surprised to meet the men behind the boys. When he's not on tour, on set, or with his wife and two kids,

Roach holds down a full-time job as a regional sales manager for Sparkling Springs, a purified water company.

"I use all my vacation days to film the Trailer Park Boys."

Roach also points out that he's much more well-rounded than his on-screen persona, Randy.

"I know my character. He's not the smartest guy in the world, and I like to think, in real life, that I've got some sense about me. I mean, I've got a university degree in business . . . and I'm a very dedicated, hard-working person."

Dunsworth's history is equally surprising. Having started out as a cab driver, Dunsworth is now one of Halifax's most revered actors. He's worked for CTV and the CBC, and has built up Halifax's most successful alternative theatre company, Pier-One Theatre.

And he doesn't live in a trailer park, but on a yacht.

"Mr. Lahey's a big drunk and, in real life, [John] doesn't drink at all," says Roach.

While it should come as no surprise that Roach and Dunsworth have little in common with their Dionysian characters, fans will have to wait until Dec. 3 to hear more secrets and tales of trailer-park mayhem.

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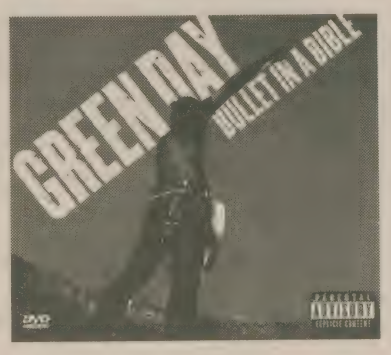

Green Day
Bullet in A Bible
Reprise

by Richard McDevitt

Green Day faced a dilemma a few years ago. Their 2000 album *Warning* touched on some bigger themes, like politics, and ditched the negativity that was so prevalent on *Insomniac* and *Nimrod*. But there was something missing.

The lyrics and the music might have come from an honest place, but the album's production was too clean, and it was hard to take Billie Joe Armstrong seriously, considering that he was pushing 30, getting fat, and quite visibly losing the passion to play his own music.

Moving on to Green Day in 2005, the band's first attempt at a concept album, *American Idiot*, won them a Grammy and seven MTV Music Video Awards. Three out of five of the album's singles went to number one, and they had two mini-epic music videos that pushed the format to its limit.

But perhaps Green Day's most impressive achievement of the last year was their graduation to stadium shows. That's right folks—Green Day is up there with Bruce Springsteen and the Rolling Stones.

This live DVD/CD is just icing on the cake for Green Day fans. Anybody who has seen them live knows that watching them on television is no substitute for the real thing. Nevertheless, the production values are excellent.

Film director Ridley Scott's production company produced the video recording. Samuel Bayer was again left in charge of directing, after his work on all the *American Idiot* videos, not to mention videos for Nirvana and the Smashing Pumpkins

There are enough cameras to catch all the shenanigans, and the show cuts between backstage footage and band interviews that show them happy, nervous, and just plain silly.

The result is two hours of insanity. The band played two shows at Milton Keynes National Bowl in England to crowds of 65,000 people. The set list had to be abbreviated for the DVD, but all the crucial elements of *American Idiot* are in there, and they throw in the old hits at all the right times.

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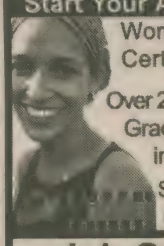
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UVic writers contribute to local soap opera

The brainchild of two BBC vets and director Paul Wu, *Mile Zero* personifies the Garden City

by Melanie Tromp

Picture scenic Victoria, tagged with the "newlywed and nearly dead" stigma; a city steeped in conservative history, where fun is found in carriage rides, stodgy museums and garden tours.

Now toss in a steamy affair between the provincial government's Minister of Industry and his archnemesis, the frontrunner of an environmental nongovernmental organization—tearing off each other's clothes in a parking garage downtown—and you've got *Mile Zero*, Victoria's unconventionally refreshing new tourist pitch.

The Victoria-based, Victoria-shot drama series is the brainchild of BBC vets Dai Davies (and his wife, Karen) and director Paul Wu, inspired by the sweeping success that Brit daytime drama Coronation Street found overseas.

The Davies duo moved to the West Coast from London three years ago, only to find a pool of diverse artistic talent with no outlet due to the fact that Victoria has virtually no presence in the television industry. Support and curiosity for the soap has picked up momentum, and some 50 cast and crew, including staff and students from UVic, have voluntarily signed onto the ambitious venture.

Two of the university's finest from the faculty of writing, David Brock and Jasmine O'Brien, are working on *Mile Zero*'s writing team to flesh out the storyline revolving around lead character and sultry vamp, Victoria.

"I think it speaks pretty highly to UVic's dramatic writing reputation that *Mile Zero* thought to look for some of their writers here," says Brock, an award-winning playwright and a product of UVic's writing program.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Saanich fireman Scott Norris is a "firefighter/artist" on the show.

The show is attempting to draw on the West Coast experience, simultaneously profiling a range of local talents while incorporating the First Nations perspective and highlighting political and environmental issues in the surrounding area.

"Victoria is often seen as [having] a conservative political climate," says Brock, "but we certainly aren't presenting conservative characters. The more we focus on characters and less on political agenda, the more dramatic the show [gets]."

Using a soap opera as a vehicle to put Victoria's unique culture—both the beautiful and the blatantly weird—on the televised map has amused the skeptics, as PR for the show has been promoting the bold catchphrase: "Because Victoria is a soap opera".

"I don't see soap opera as a 'dirty word,' as in the North American daytime sense of something like *Days of Our Lives*," says Brock. "I see it more in terms of the dramatic premise. Our lives are dramatic, and yes, sometimes in hindsight, we over-dramatize. [Soap opera] characters have conflicts that make you want to keep watching—you want to find out how they will or will not get out of their problems. In a sense, everywhere there's a person, there's a soap opera, really."

After Brock's play *The Perfect Hands of the Irresistible Ed* garnered a major Theatre B.C. award, the series' head writer, Silk Chauncey, recruited him to jump on board with the show. What drew him to sign on with the *Mile Zero* team was the unique opportunity to work on a project that had such a wealth of professional experience behind it.

Michelle Cho, a former commerce student at UVic who now works full time on campus and volunteers as a production assistant for *Mile Zero*, shares Brock's contagious enthusiasm for the talent involved in the project. "It's amazing that a bunch of people from different backgrounds are motivated to contribute their personal investment, working towards a common goal," says Cho.

Cast and crew are aiming high, and the drama certainly has the potential to shine as a cult daytime jewel once it works out the bumps of being a very new and virtually no-budget production.

Mile Zero, shot over two intense weekends this past summer—and piloted on Victoria's local Shaw Cable after a glamorous premiere at the Fairmont Empress hotel—was picked up by KVOS for additional episodes.

So far, feedback has been positive, although Cho pointed out that the producers send out reviews both good and bad to the soap's stakeholders.

"[Feedback has been] mostly positive," says Brock. "We've intentionally set up a plot top-heavy on intrigue, [and] people genuinely want to know what happens next, which is probably crucial for a good soap opera pilot."

The five writers, from a variety of disciplines, have "got a lot planned with some of the characters," says Brock.

His favourite character so far? Watch for Phil, the Minister of Industry's eccentric sidekick.

"Phil is vulnerable. He's loyal, but this is a soap opera and you just know that sooner or later, Phil won't be able to take any more of it," chuckles Brock. "He's a bit of a Judas character, only funnier!"

Episode 3 airs for the first time on Dec. 3 on KVOS (channel 70 in Victoria). Check out www.mile-zero.ca for more info.

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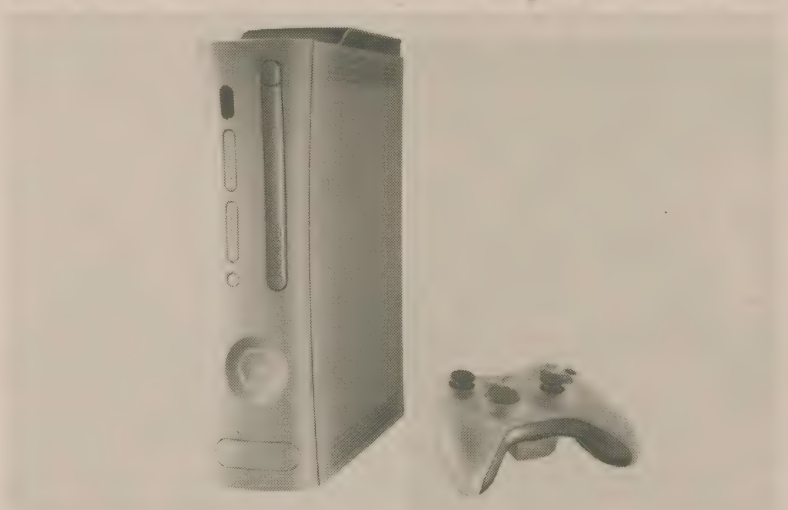
The next-generation console war begins

The success of Microsoft's first Xbox allowed for the production of the more elegant, streamlined Xbox 360

by Graham Stark

It was with trepidation that I swallowed my Microsoft-hating pride and put down the $50 pre-order on a new Xbox 360 back in September, and I'm very glad I did. I was Sony all the way—PSone, PS2 and PSP—until I saw Microsoft's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) press conference and was swayed. Xbox 360 executive producer J. Allard did his job perfectly, convincing me that there was a void in my life that only the 360 could fill.



PROVIDED IMAGES

Above, the Xbox 360 with its ergonomic wireless gamepad. Right, *Perfect Dark* heroine Joanna Dark.

Microsoft released their second game console, the Xbox 360, on Nov. 22, following up its surprisingly successful Xbox—surprising because Microsoft didn't make video games, they made PC software, but not console games.

In an industry dominated by giants like Nintendo and Sony, Microsoft had a lot of guts to try muscling into an already saturated market. It paid off for them in the end, thanks in no small part to Microsoft buying many game developing houses outright to create Xbox-exclusive content.

Before its release, the gaming community was all geared up to tear the Xbox apart. Everything was fodder for ridicule, from its large size—it was, after all, just a consumer-grade computer turned on its side—to its clumsy controller, to its aggressive marketing.

Once the system actually got going, however, it couldn't be stopped. *Halo 2*, an Xbox-exclusive title, broke sales records not just for video games, but also for all entertainment media, with an astonishing one million copies sold in pre-orders alone. It became obvious that someone at Microsoft knew what they were doing.

That someone was Microsoft VP J. Allard.

With the success of the Xbox—made relatively cheaply with off-the-shelf consumer PC hardware—Microsoft had the power and Allard had the freedom to make the console he had always wanted.

Ambitious does not begin to describe the plans Allard laid out for the 360 launch. Being the first console of a new generation is hard enough, but the 360 launched simultaneously in all three major world markets—North America, Europe and Japan. That's never been done before, and with good reason: it's hard to do.

Despite promises, Microsoft could not produce enough systems for launch day, leaving thousands of gamers worldwide in the lurch. Locally, EB Games in the Bay Centre had 121 pre-orders by launch day, and were told they were only getting around 60, a number that was later dropped to 48.

For the lucky ones, sitting down with a 360 is a new experience. The physical console hasn't shaken its Microsoft roots. Sporting a giant external power supply attached to the cord and loud cooling fans, it still holds similarities to desktop computers. Beyond that, the design of the console, both in the hardware and in the on-screen interface, is slick and refined.

Allard promised, and he delivered—the controller is the most comfortable yet, and, assuming you bought the full system, it's wireless. The freedom of chatting with your friends online, your headset plugged into the controller, and being able to walk to the kitchen for a drink, without disrupting the conversation, is very cool. Four controllers can be connected wirelessly, and two can be connected by USB.

The controller can run on AA batteries, but the best bet is to buy the extra Play & Charge Kit, which is a rechargeable pack that attaches to one of the system's USB ports, and can charge while you play. The ubiquitous and oddly placed black and white buttons from the Xbox are gone, replaced by a second set of shoulder buttons, called bumpers. Just like last time, right in the middle of the controller, is the Xbox logo, but this time with a purpose—it's the "Live" button.

Pressing the Live button at any time, even during a game, accesses the menu for Xbox Live, Microsoft's online gaming network, which has received an overhaul as well. Every player now has a Gamercard, a profile that shows a player's achievements in all of their games, both online and off. Each game has many achievements of varying difficulties, and each one earns you a better Gamerscore, which essentially amounts to online bragging rights.

Furthermore, the newly added Xbox Live Marketplace is an online hub where players can download trailers for upcoming games, trade content, play old-school arcade games and buy pictures and themes to customize their layout.

Xbox Live's Silver level comes with the system and includes everything mentioned above. To actually play online against your friends—or anyone—requires a Gold level account and costs about $60 a year. But it's worth it.

Many of the games available for the 360 launch don't make full use of the system's graphical power, as several are ported from the first Xbox or PC. But as with any console, things will only get better, and games like *Perfect Dark Zero*, *Kameo* and *Project Gotham Racing 3* look like a pretty amazing place to start.

Microsoft is also touting the various non-gaming aspects of the system. The 360 allows users to rip CDs, play DVDs, connect to iPods and digital cameras, change faceplates, and interface with Windows computers and the Windows Media Centre.

Chances are you won't be able to buy one of these wonderful toys in time for Christmas, unless you feel like paying triple the retail price on the Internet. But if you know someone on the inside who owes you a favour, this is certainly the expensive techno gift of the season, and a mighty fine system at that.

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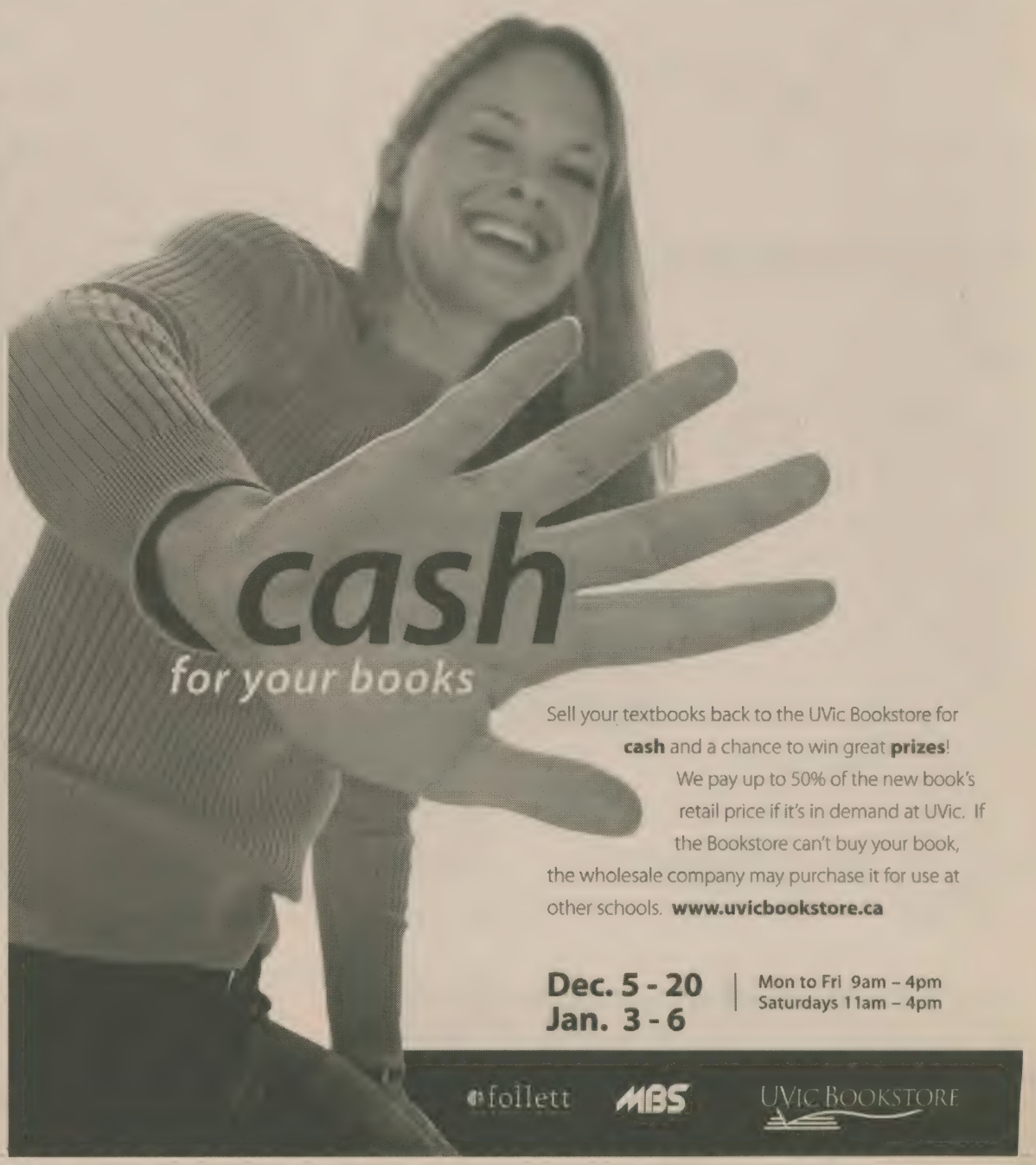

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CD | ELLIOTT BROOD

Elliott Brood
Ambassador
Six Shooter Records

by Laurie Graham

If you've been paying attention to Jian Ghomeshi's iPod commercial—I mean, radio program—on the CBC, you are already familiar with Elliott Brood's song "The Bridge," from their new album, *Ambassador*. It's the dark horse of Ghomeshi's top-10-songs-for-the-mp3-player show, and it's currently holding at second place, behind Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," as a song any self-respecting Canadian music fan should know at least as well as that prized collection of unopened stubbies in the basement.

The album itself is a dark horse. *Ambassador*'s dozen songs are haunting and immediately memorable, with a whiskey-tinged fervour that's hard to see coming.

The trio from Windsor—Casey Laforet (guitar and banjo), Mark Sasso (guitar and vocals), and Steve Pitkin (drums and suitcases...yes, suitcases)—play the hell out of every song on the album, conjuring images of ghost towns, gunfights, and down-home reckoning. If you caught Elliott Brood's Nov. 29 show in Victoria, you can attest to their vigour.

Sasso's morning-after wheeze leans into each lyric and tucks itself in among the instrumental tracks, creating a more layered tableau than a conventional singin'-songwritin' endeavour. Ambience has a place on the album, right down to the clinking of beer bottles in the background.

Ambassador has been called a "death country" record, but there are folk-rock underpinnings here that flourish on tracks like "Twill" and "Back of the Lot." They come off a little flaccid, though, on "Johnny Rooke" and "Superior."

Ghomeshi or no Ghomeshi, *Ambassador* is a formidable addition to the canon of modern Canadian music.

CD | ALEXISONFIRE AND MONEEN

Alexisonfire and Moneen
Switcheroo
Hassle Records

by Cole Roche

Only when you combine two aggressive Canadian bands with a flair for raw, powerful vocals and intricate instrumentals do you get something as intense as the *Switcheroo* EP from Alexisonfire and Moneen. The disc was an experiment for the two bands, contrasting Moneen's more relaxed vocals with Alexisonfire's unique brand of screamo.

The EP has Moneen covering Alexisonfire's "Accidents" and "Sharks and Danger," and Alexis covering Moneen's "The Passing of America" and "Bleed and Blister." Additionally, the exclusive new Alexis track "Charlie Sheen vs. Henry Rollins" retains the vicious magic of previous Alexis singles like "Accidents" and "Waterwings": a magnetic lure that makes the tunes both catchy and vigorous—an almost unheard of feat in the world of screamo.

The Alexisonfire influence in *Switcheroo* seems to win out. When Moneen covers an Alexis track, it still sounds like an Alexis track—sans screamo—due to their distinctive lyrical style. When Alexisonfire covers a Moneen track, George Logan's raw rendition of the lyrics converts it into pure Alexis style. The result is a collision of talents yielding cover songs that arguably improve on the originals.

The *Switcheroo* EP isn't for everyone, and probably shouldn't be a listener's introduction to Alexisonfire or Moneen, but for fans of either, it's a must-have collaboration between two of Canada's most successful independent bands.

CD | THE MOST SERENE REPUBLIC

The Most Serene Republic
Underwater Cinematographer
Arts & Crafts

by Max Lamb

It's surprising that this is The Most Serene Republic's debut album. It sounds more like a well-established band taking a stab at hypno-acid rock in the same way that The Flaming Lips or Spiritualized did. *Underwater Cinematographer* is like a musical version of a lava lamp. It's a surreal drug adventure from a group of Canadians who think they're smarter than you, and they're probably right.

TMSR hails from Toronto, from the same Arts & Crafts family that gave us Broken Social Scene and Feist.

They're a six-piece fronted by Adrian Jewitt, whose high tenor voice is enough to send the Lips' Wayne Coyne for lessons.

While Jewitt proves himself as an excellent frontman, the real star here is Ryan Lenssen on keyboards. His relentless keys dominate the album, leaving Jewitt in a bind to keep pace.

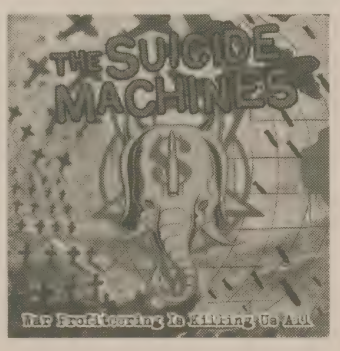
Underwater Cinematographer plays so continuously, it's difficult to distinguish the breaks between one track and the next, which works perfectly with the record's sleepy mood. It's not overly depressing either, as each song brings its own flavour of sunshine to the mix, making for an exceptionally sweet record while avoiding any sugary pop copouts.

The titles of each track are also hilariously in tune with themselves, like "The Protagonist Suddenly Realizes What He Must Do In The Middle Of Downtown Traffic."

This is the kind of music that Zach Braff would love to use in a movie, probably in some scene where the main character floats below the diving board while the weird kid takes photos from the shallow end.

Most serene, indeed.

CD | THE SUICIDE MACHINES



The Suicide Machines
War Profiteering Is Killing Us All
Side One Dummy Records

by Max Lamb

This is one of the stupidest political punk records to come out in years. Not since NOFX's *The War On Errorism* has an established and borderline-respectable punk band thrown out their individuality with such a crude anti-government, anti-war concept album.

The Suicide Machines made a name in the big ska boom of the mid-'90s alongside Rancid and Sublime, flying mostly under the radar until *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* included their single "New Girl" on the first videogame's soundtrack. This exposure earned their 1996 album, *Destruction By Definition*, a lot of critical acclaim, but they have since receded into independent cult status. This is their attempt at getting back in the spotlight, and it's terrible at best.

Every song sounds, more or less, like the Suicide Machines of 10 years ago, and using politics as an alibi is unacceptable. It's supercharged battle music to the same god-damned note over and over again, with no real politics in mind beyond the simple anti-war message. Jason Navarro's voice may be pleasantly grating at first, but this continues for a good half hour. It borders on screamo, the most irritating of all emos.

The Suicide Machines have been around for 15 years, and they don't seem to have evolved at all. "New Girl" was a great song because it knew it was stupid. *War Profiteering Is Killing Us All* thinks it's being imaginative while reselling a sound that should have died years ago.

CHEERS AND JEERS FALL 2005

by Sacha Narine

Here are a few nuggets of entertainment that have been stickin' in my craw throughout the fall term.

Best Single by a Scruffy Alaskan– "The Commander Thinks Aloud" / The Long Winters
John Roderick is a strange man. His taut, deliberate wail opens "The Commander Thinks Aloud," the one truly memorable tune on The Long Winters' October EP, *Ultimatum*. While the other three tracks and the two live tunes play to an empty hall, "Commander" soars to peaks of blustery melodrama that must look more like foothills to a guy who grew up in Anchorage, Alaska, which he calls "a conservative and insular little shithole . . . on the very lip of the civilized world."

Best Squirm-inducing Vanity Project – *Shopgirl*
Steve Martin is a brilliant comic, an erudite conversationalist (or so we've read), and a truly awful writer. Adapted for the screen, his 2001 novella, *Shopgirl*, makes for a tasteless and fiercely sentimental study of sexual predation. Martin plays a rich old man who woos and screws a young hottie, Claire Danes. Jason Schwartzman plays Martin's younger, dumber romantic competition. The result is a film far less flattering to its writer and star than Martin likely imagines.

Best Fake Commentary Show starring a Fake Egotist – *The Colbert Report*
There's no "T" in "Colber Repor," and that's the way we like it. This spin-off of "college favourite" *The Daily Show* stars comedian Stephen Colbert as a spot-on caricature of political windbags like Bill O'Reilly and Tucker Carlson. When Colbert delivers blustery monologues on "truthiness" and "jobbing," it's hard to separate the spoof from its gag-inducing source material.

Best PC Game – *F.E.A.R.*
F.E.A.R. is the genuinely idiotic title of a simple but effective horror-themed action game. Stealing story elements from *The Ring* and game mechanics from *Halo* and *Max Payne*, *F.E.A.R.* delivers a few hokey scares entrenched in hours and hours of high-calibre interactive killing.

COMMENT | HIV/AIDS IN SPORTS

Awareness came in one singular, magic moment

by Megan Stewart

Some people will try to tell you sports aren't important, and to a certain degree, they know what they're talking about. On the other hand, those people missed a thing or two along the way.

Remember who brought home the Grey Cup? It was only Nov. 27 that the Eskimos and Alouettes played the CFL championship game in Vancouver. Does it matter, once you're away from the bright lights of BC Place, that the close match was the first since 1961 to head in to overtime? Do you remember (or even care) who scored the winning touchdown? Or was it a field goal?

Do you know which athletes are HIV-positive? If you do, can you remember how you found out?

When Earvin "Magic" Johnson told the world he was HIV-positive and, at 32, stepped away from the Lakers and the NBA, he stimulated thought about the "white gay man's disease" and educated the public about the changing face of AIDS.

The first overall pick in the 1979 NBA draft, Johnson would reach levels of excellence most professional athletes can only watch at the seminal All Star game.

Mr. Showtime lit the City of Angels with his mega-watt smile, and the town grinned right back as he led the Lakers to five NBA championships, nabbed three league MVP awards, and defined the triple double for making baskets, grabbing boards and finding the open man all in one night. He changed the game.

At 6-foot-9 and 225 pounds, Johnson was the tallest point guard the league had ever seen and he set a precedent for moving the ball in a, well, magical way for a person his size. Johnson also reached a standard few pro athletes can say they met when he told the world that promiscuity—allowed, encouraged and anticipated for a man of his superstar status—and unsafe sex were the reasons he contracted the virus.

He disclosed his status, which he said he learned of only the day before, at a press conference Nov. 7, 1991, saying he wanted teens and young adults "to understand that safe sex is the way to go." Johnson's disclosure was one of the singularly most powerful moments in sport, even if it took place off the court.

Trevis Smith should have taken note.

The Saskatchewan Roughrider, 15 at the time of Johnson's disclosure, brought shame to the CFL and professional sports this fall for drawing allegations he slept with at least two women—one in Surrey and another in Regina—without disclosing his HIV-positive status and without practicing safe sex. The six-year veteran linebacker is charged with aggravated sexual assault.

Smith had no responsibility to his fans to share his personal health information, which he had disclosed to his coaches and team administrators, but he certainly owed his sexual partners that much.

In 1991, HIV/AIDS was poorly understood and it was wrongly pegged as a death sentence, and that afternoon as a "sad day for basketball." It was also wrongly reported that Johnson had full-blown AIDS, and some gave him mere months to live.

What you can do to avoid AIDS
"Magic Johnson's message is straight-talking, honest, and accurate. This book could help save lives."
—American Medical Association
EARVIN "MAGIC" JOHNSON

PROVIDED PHOTO

Johnson is certainly not the only infected pro player, but he is one of the few to publicly own up to the less-than-sexy consequences of athletic renown and status.

The risk of transmitting HIV or AIDS during a game is virtually non-existent, but Johnson's disclosure changed how sports are played: the majority of professional leagues in North America have policies relating to open wounds and blood. In the NBA, a bleeding athlete is immediately taken off the court and trainers wear gloves to attend to him.

Legendary sport commentator Jim Murray wrote in 2001—the 10-year anniversary of that considerable disclosure—that Johnson had faced many formidable opponents and HIV/AIDS was just one more to knock flat on its back.

"Nobody has things all its own way against Magic Johnson," he wrote for the Los Angeles Times. "Ask Bird, Isiah, Dominique, Jordan. Magic may be winning something far more important than a Final Four, an NBA championship, Player of the Year. Magic may be winning for a whole generation."

Johnson forced a generation of athletes and spectators to change how and what they thought about HIV/AIDS. Despite his best efforts, Trevis Smith can't tarnish the reputation or the sacrifices of one who came before him.

Local swimmers join in World Swim for Malaria

by Anna Czolpinski

Malaria, the world's most prevalent parasitic disease, kills three million people every year, almost all of them under five, extremely poor, and African. The development of a vaccine would contribute toward controlling the disease, but mosquito nets already present a major tool to prevent infection.

On Dec. 3, one million people around the globe will participate in the World Swim for Malaria, an event that aims to raise money for the purchase and distribution of insecticide-treated nets.

Speedo, one of the event's leading sponsors, encouraged the Canadian swimming community to get involved and two Victoria clubs—Pacific Coast Swimming (PCS) and the Vikes swim team—took up the challenge. Three days before the swim, they had raised more than $1,440 from donors in Canada, the U.S. and South Africa.

PSC and Vikes swimmer Stephanie Dixon signed up her teammates because she understands the value of an effective health care system.

"I wanted to do this because I spent a lot of time in hospitals getting surgery and blood transfusions when I was a child," said Dixon. "Without free medical care I wouldn't be here today. I also know how many people in the world live in places without access to such care."

References to malaria have been recorded since antiquity. During the 20th century, efforts were directed toward understanding the disease and controlling its mosquito carrier. As a consequence, preventative drugs and treatments are available and malaria has been virtually eradicated from the developed world.

However, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are between 300 million and 500 million clinical cases per year worldwide, with the majority of the deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

PROVIDED PHOTO

A 1962 World Health Organization campaign raised awareness about malaria through postage stamps in more than 140 countries.

PCS head coach Ron Jacks immediately understood the importance of this cause. From his travels in Africa, exposure to inadequate medical facilities and experience with a variety of "diseases of the poor" like malaria, Jacks was quick to encourage his swimmers to take a few laps for World Swim for Malaria.

Although scientists have spent decades trying, a vaccine has not been developed and because of this, treatment and prevention are the only options. The majority of African countries can't afford what drugs have been developed, and the parasite can mutate rapidly and grow resistant to available drugs and treatments.

The countries south of the Sahara also lack the necessary infrastructure, such as proper medical facilities, to mount sustainable campaigns against the disease. The region is also home to the most life-threatening species of the malaria parasite, as well as the species of mosquito that presents the highest risk of transmitting the parasites.

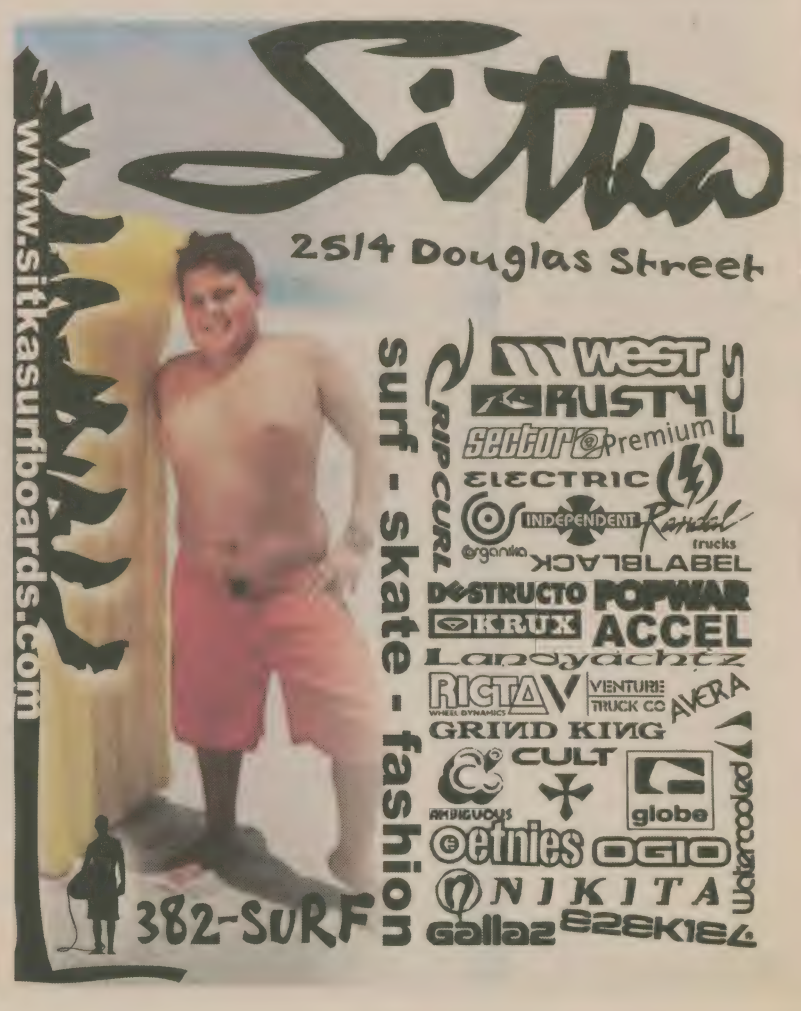
Mosquito nets treated with insecticide present one low-tech solution. There is a direct correlation between the number of infectious bites and the likelihood of developing the disease.

Malaria-causing mosquitoes almost always bite at night, and nets provide a physical barrier against them.

When treated with an insecticide, bed nets are more effective as a chemical halo extends beyond the mosquito net itself.

Nets have proven an effective tool, yet according to WHO, fewer than five per cent of children living in sub-Saharan Africa slept under them in 2003.

A bed net does not cost much money—approximately $4—but it must be installed properly, used regularly, and treated with insecticide every six to 12 months. Promotional and educational campaigns also draw attention to the importance of a bed net, and can help persuade people to use one.



Relic scoreboard draws red card

'Sometimes it works, sometimes it sucks,' says Vikes player

by Allison Butula

Standing high over Centennial Stadium, the remainder of what was once considered a legacy of the XV Commonwealth games barely continues to keep score and count the minutes. Seen as a nuisance by athletes, administration, and visiting teams, the scoreboard has seen better days.

Players, mainly on the soccer teams, lament having to look at it and many prefer to ignore it. Administrators recognize that it is past its prime, but say finances are currently needed elsewhere.

"It's a dinosaur. We need to find a new one," said Clint Hamilton, director of athletics and administration. "Are we talking about replacing it? Yes. Is it something we're going to do immediately? No."

"I try not to pay too much attention to it during games," said a defender with the Vikes men's soccer team who wished to remain anonymous. "I never know if it's actually going to be the right score so I'm not going to stop focusing to try and figure out what's going on up there. Sometimes it works, sometimes it sucks."

Before arriving at UVic in 1994 for the Games, the scoreboard travelled to a number of different countries for various sporting events and arrived in Victoria in a less-than-ideal state. According to the athletic department's co-ordinator of operations and facilities, the scoreboard is out of date, faulty and the "technology and functions [are] no longer desirable or reliable."

"The board is very worn, old and no longer reliable," said Jim Hays. "The board was never designed to be moved from venue to venue and its last stop was in Victoria as it was deemed unable to be moved again." Seiko, the manufacturer, and the Commonwealth Games Society then donated the scoreboard to the university.

The wear and tear of repeatedly being assembled and taken apart took its toll on the equipment, damaging wires and other electrical parts. According to Hays, two technicians had to work on the unit full time to ensure it would continue to function during the Commonwealth Games.

A computer controls the positioning of thousands of two-inch square panels to create the images—yellow numbers and letters—on the scoreboard.

Over the years the athletics department has purchased various parts to keep the technology running. However, shipping the pricey parts from Europe is expensive and perhaps pointless since the board will never return to full functionality.

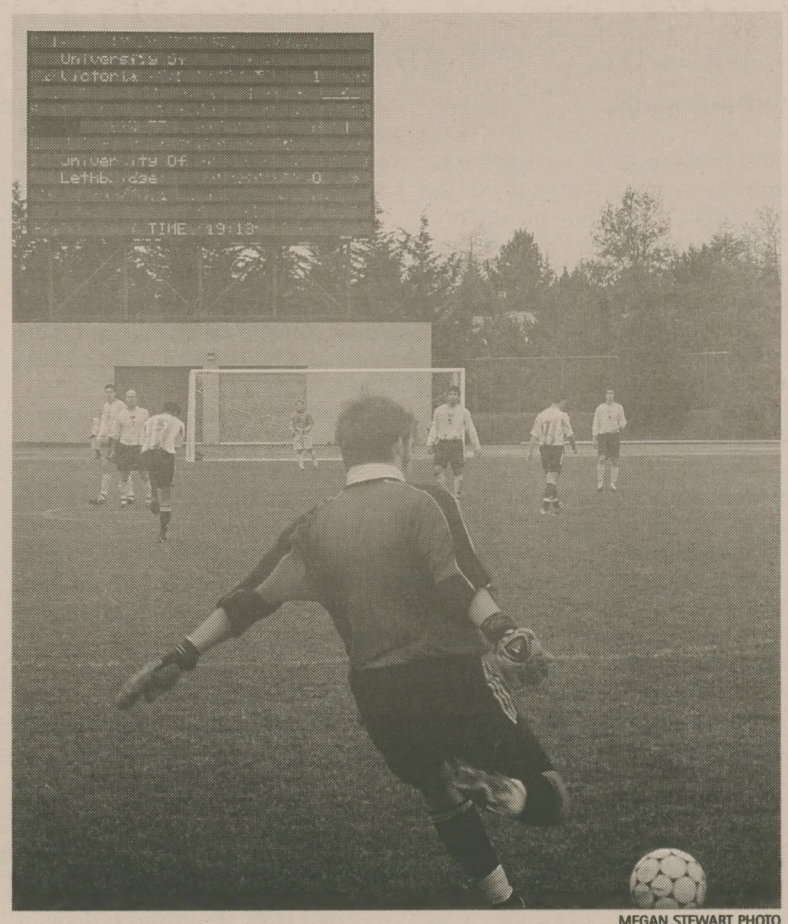
According to Hays, it would have cost approximately $350,000 to replace the scoreboard at the close of the Commonwealth Games.

The FIFA World Youth Soccer Championship is planned for July 2007, and Centennial Stadium, along with venues in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, is scheduled to serve as one of the host sites. The 24-team, 52-match tournament is the second largest FIFA event, behind the men's World Cup.

UVic is planning on adding 3,000 temporary seats to the Stadium's permanent 5,000.

Hays says tournament organizers won't be using the scoreboard, but will opt to install temporary video display screens for the event.

"They are not interested in using the stadium board," said Hays.



MEGAN STEWART PHOTO

Athletic administrators and players say the out-of-date and faulty scoreboard needs replacing.

Strong-arm tactics

by Micah Luxen

This is arm wrestling, this is mania—this is a law school fundraiser!

It's Thursday, Nov. 24—the big Lunch Hour for law students—and into the lounge bursts Bling Bling Blingdra who accuses her only remaining opponent, Emily "Team Canada" Boyle of using steroids for the big fight. But after a loud rumble, Bling Bling Blingdra, aka Indra Bhaggan, takes the table for the women's championship, which she will ultimately win.

"I feel like an unstoppable force! I've been watching Tyson fights, perfecting the ear bite, listening to 2Pac and eating hummus," she exclaims amid a roar from the crowd.

Law student Alonzo Abbey organized the fundraiser to help send one student from UVic's Black Law Students' Association to the national conference in Windsor this February. Forty participants took part in the arm-wrestling antics. The tournament raised $250.

MICAH LUXEN PHOTO

Professors and students look on as Captain Canuck and and The Hammer go head to head.

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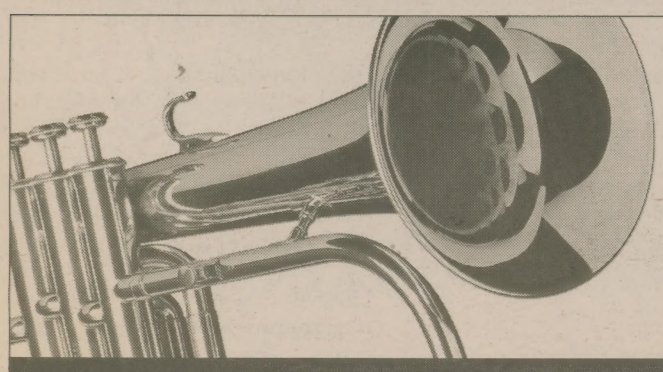

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When sport and politics unite

Liberian soccer great George Weah campaigns to lead his country

by David Karp

They call him King George for his authority on the soccer pitch. But his bid to win the presidential throne of his homeland fell short.

George Weah lost the Liberian election Nov. 8 to Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the country's past minister of finance, a Harvard graduate and now the first female head of state in Africa.

For Weah, it was soccer that propelled him to international success and gave him the fame that allowed him to launch a political career.

"I believe that sport provides very valid training for life," Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi told a Liberian newspaper before the votes were tallied.

"With the election victory [Weah] will score the most important goal of his life," said Bertusconi, owner of AC Milan, Weah's team between 1995 and 2000.

Chris Vaughan Griffiths, editor of the *World Football Pages* says athletes have an advantage over opposing candidates because they're familiar to and connect with ordinary people.

"Maybe athletes have [a] one-up there because they're immediately hitting the common man," said Griffiths. "They may score the popular vote up front, but what happens when you put Steve Nash on a platform to debate the latest economic issues of British Columbia?"

Weah, 39, was born in Monrovia, Liberia's capital. The country, situated along the Atlantic Ocean, is roughly four times the size of Vancouver Island, both in population and physical area. Liberia borders two war-torn countries, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast, and was plagued by 14 years of civil war during the '80s and '90s.

Many businesses and people fled the country, including Gurmant Grewal, Conservative MP in Surrey.

"It was a very chaotic situation," said Grewal, who taught business in Liberia two decades ago.

It was in this environment that Weah learned his trade: soccer. Raised by his grandmother, a young Weah played barefoot in neighborhood dust patches that passed for playgrounds.

"It's just like ice hockey is important to Canadians," said Grewal. "Soccer was equally important to Liberians."

As a teenager, Weah was a goalkeeper, then a striker for Liberian teams, and signed his first professional contract with a Cameroon team at the age of 20.

A year later, Weah was playing in Europe and signed with Monaco in the French league. He played for AC Milan, Chelsea, and Paris Saint Germain, among other clubs, and captured championships throughout two continents.

Weah was named FIFA World Player of the Year in 1995 and still is the only African to be nominated—let alone win—the award. That year he was also European and African Player of the Year.

To help soccer development in his home country, Weah shelled out close to $2 million of his own money to fund Liberia's national team and pay for jerseys, cleats, equipment, transportation and even his teammates' salaries. He also played, coached and directed the team. In 2001 *Sports Illustrated* described him as a "one-man football association."

After he retired from soccer,, Weah decided in June to run for the Liberian presidency.

Canadian soccer greats and politicians alike agree that there are common talents needed for sports and politics.

"He's a very successful individual," said Bob Lenarduzzi, head of soccer operations for the Vancouver Whitecaps and former coach and player for Canada's national team.

"To become a great athlete, you need vision," said Lenarduzzi, who has been asked by different political parties on multiple occasions to run for office. "You need to have dedication. You need to know how to get the best out of people around you. Those kinds of things could all be transferred to politics."

Rob Fleming, MLA for Victoria-Hillside, plays for Fernwood United of the Vancouver Island Soccer League and also suggests that there may be similarities, but said teens on the debate club are more likely to enter politics than those on any team roster.

"There's certainly the teamwork element," he said, "like working with the caucus. There are different positions in soccer, just like everyone plays a different role in caucus. Then there's the party leader, who is like the captain and makes the tough calls."

Fleming said many MLAs in the B.C. legislature are athletes—Gregor Robertson plays soccer, Bob Simpson is a triathlete, Jargrup Brar and John Horgan play basketall, while Scott Fraser, Bruce Ralston and Colin Hansen are runners.

"I think even Gordo's a jock," said Fleming of Premier Gordon Campbell.

According to the BBC, observers declared the vote "peaceful and transparent," but Weah's party has alleged electoral fraud.

Soccer magazine editor Griffiths questions if public office is a good venue for processional athletes like Weah.

"Should athletes be in politics? Probably not—as a ground rule, they spent their lives tuning their bodies, not their minds."

PROVIDED PHOTOS

Political groups in Liberia and Canada have asked George Weah, left, and Bob Lenarduzzi, right, respectively, to run for public office.

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ON CAMPUS

The History Undergraduate Society (HUGS) is calling for papers. Essays, poetry, prose, pictures, book and film reviews that are history related are needed for a journal to be published next semester. If you are interested in getting any of your work published, please email m_berishnikov@hotmail.com

C. G. Jung Society of Victoria presents—Big Fish: a film about how a father and a son meet through the myths the father tells about himself John Betts, psychologist, will lead a discussion about the film. Fri., Dec. 2, 2005, 7:00-9:45 p.m. University of Victoria David Strong Bldg. room C-116. Members $10, Full-time Students $5, Non-members $15 For info. phone 686-7702.

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Saturday December 3rd
Sustainability and Spirituality : Exploring the interconnected roles of sustainability and non-secular spirituality. A FREE PRESENTATION WITH ARRAN STEPHENS: - Founder of Nature's Path Foods. Published author and speaker; recipient of numerous eco awards; grandfather and organic gardener; student of comparative religions 30+ years meditation practitioner. Please join us for this FREE PROGRAM, 1pm at the Central Library, 735 Broughton St. Sponsored by SCIENCE OF SPIRITUALITY Victoria. Contacts: John 250 480 5119 or Penny 250 642 7694. <http://www.sos.org/>

HEY YOU

Hey you... robot boy, you're so hawt, you're gunna start a fire; and you know what I think about fires...NO FIRES!!! Luv, hawt beamer.

Jacqui—We have the same name, but I play the clarinet

The sun is gone for good, it seems
All's wet that once was dry
And I will tell my nephew
It's because he made God cry..

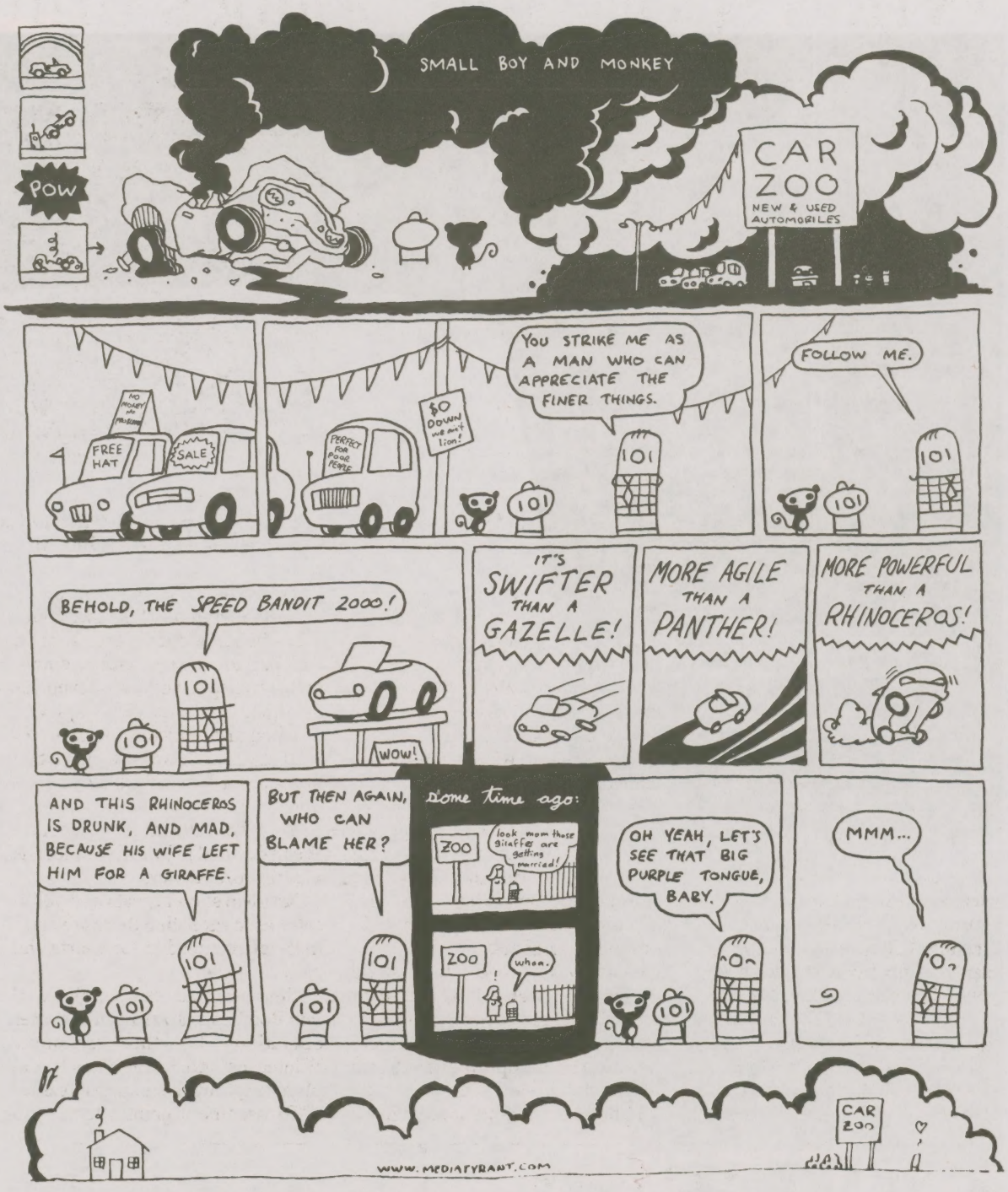
Hey Herpes Simplex 1! Fuck you, buddy. Thanks a lot for mangling my kisser.

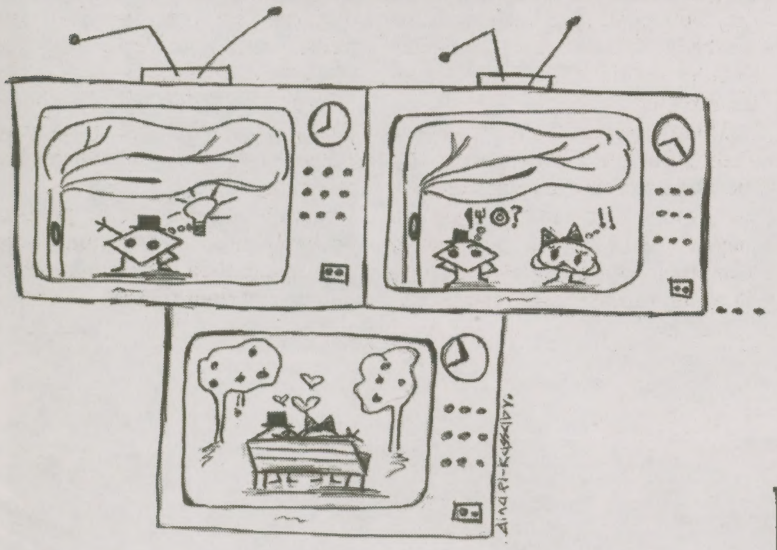
Sacha, I still love you, despite your mangled face. You're still prettier than most of the uglies out there!

Heeeeey Daaaaaaaaaaviiiiid Turrrrrrpppppppppiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnnn... you're so hawt.

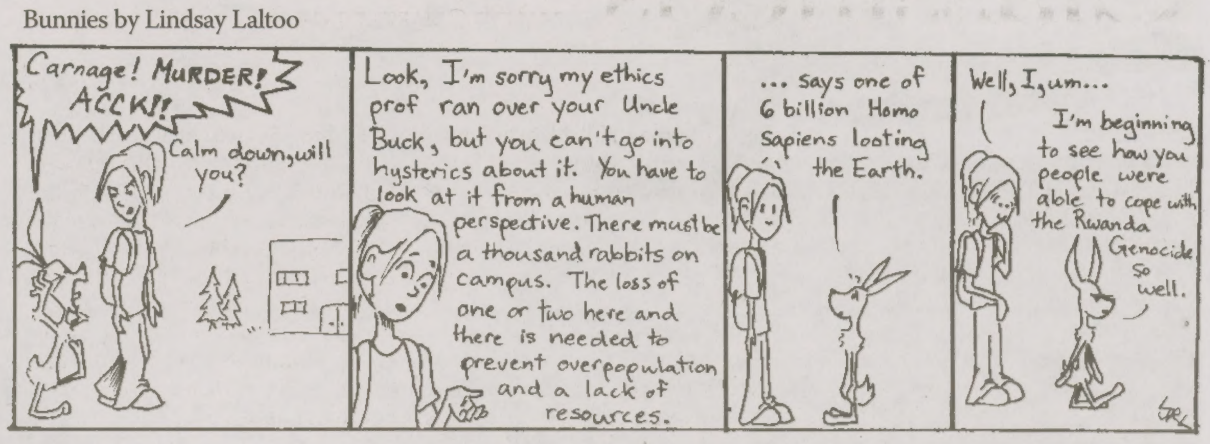
SAM & FUZZY
BOOP!
©2005 BY SAM LOGAN.
YES, MRS. CONNERS?
BAD NEWS, SIR. THE PHOTO WE PUBLISHED OF ELVIS SUMO-WRESTLING... WAS A FAKE.
EDITOR-in-CHIEF
GREAT SCOTT! HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED!?!
APPARENTLY, SOMEONE GLUED A PICTURE OF ELVIS' FACE ON TO A PICTURE OF A SUMO WRESTLER!
GASP! THAT INGENIOUS BASTARD!
WE'RE THE NATIONAL DAILY WORLDY NEWS, DAMN IT! OUR READERS DEMAND THE UTMOST JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY!
THIS CARELESS-NESS CAN NEVER BE REPEATED. WE MUST BE FAR MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT SUCH OUTLANDISH STORIES.
ANYTHING ELSE?
JUST A CALL FROM A TALKING BEAR WHO SAYS THAT HIS CAT GAVE BIRTH TO A DINOSAUR.
OOH! CALL BACK AND TELL HIM I'LL BE OVER WITH A PHOTO-GRAPHER TOMORROW MORNING.
EDITOR-in-CHIEF
SLOS!

NEW COMICS EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT: **WWW.SAMANDFUZZY.COM**


SMALL BOY AND MONKEY
POW
CAR ZOO
NEW & USED AUTOMOBILES
FREE HAT
SALE
NO MONEY OR PASSPORT
$0 DOWN we don't lion!
PERFECT FOR POOR PEOPLE
YOU STRIKE ME AS A MAN WHO CAN APPRECIATE THE FINER THINGS.
FOLLOW ME.
101
BEHOLD, THE SPEED BANDIT 2000!
WOW!
IT'S SWIFTER THAN A GAZELLE!
MORE AGILE THAN A PANTHER!
MORE POWERFUL THAN A RHINOCEROS!
AND THIS RHINOCEROS IS DRUNK, AND MAD, BECAUSE HIS WIFE LEFT HIM FOR A GIRAFFE.
BUT THEN AGAIN, WHO CAN BLAME HER?
some time ago:
ZOO
look mom those giraffes are getting married!
whoa.
OH YEAH, LET'S SEE THAT BIG PURPLE TONGUE, BABY.
MMM...
CAR ZOO
WWW.MEDIATYRANT.COM

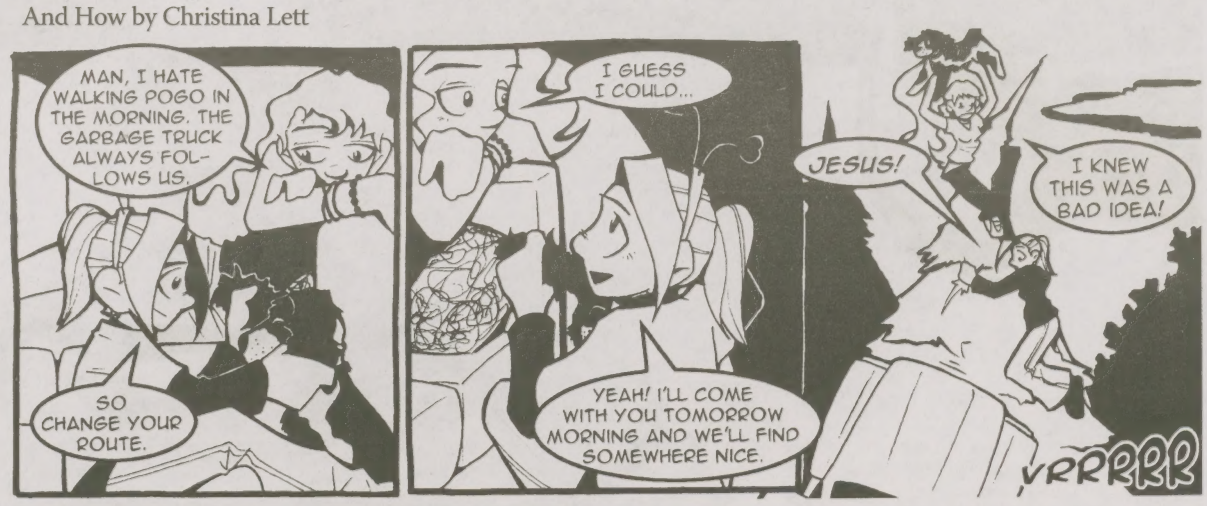


Bunnies by Lindsay Laltoo

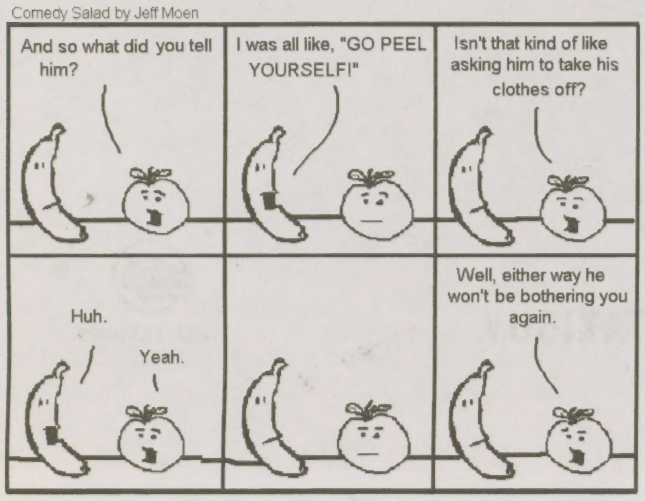

Carnage! MURDER! ACCK!!
Calm down, will you?
Look, I'm sorry my ethics prof ran over your Uncle Buck, but you can't go into hysterics about it. You have to look at it from a human perspective. There must be a thousand rabbits on campus. The loss of one or two here and there is needed to prevent overpopulation and a lack of resources.
... says one of 6 billion Homo Sapiens looting the Earth.
Well, I, um...
I'm beginning to see how you people were able to cope with the Rwanda Genocide so well.

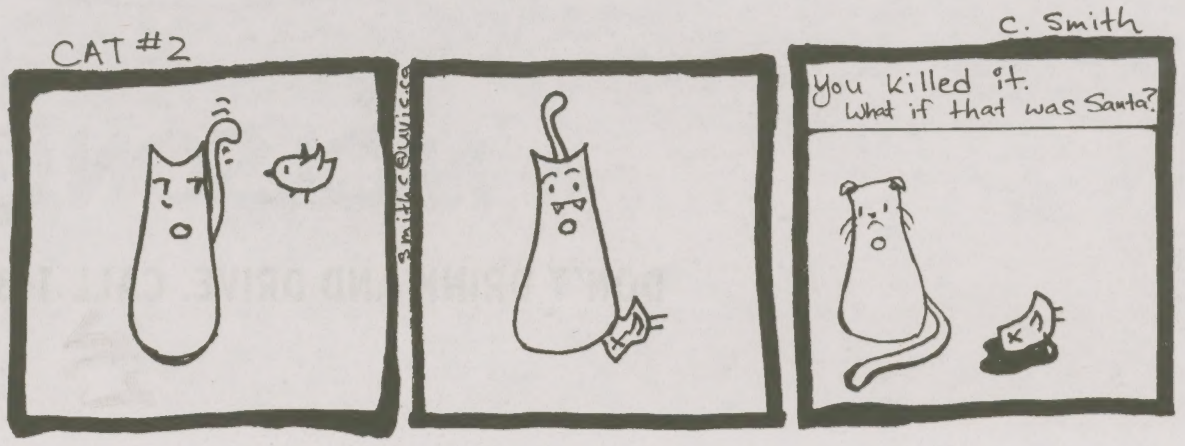
snow cannibal

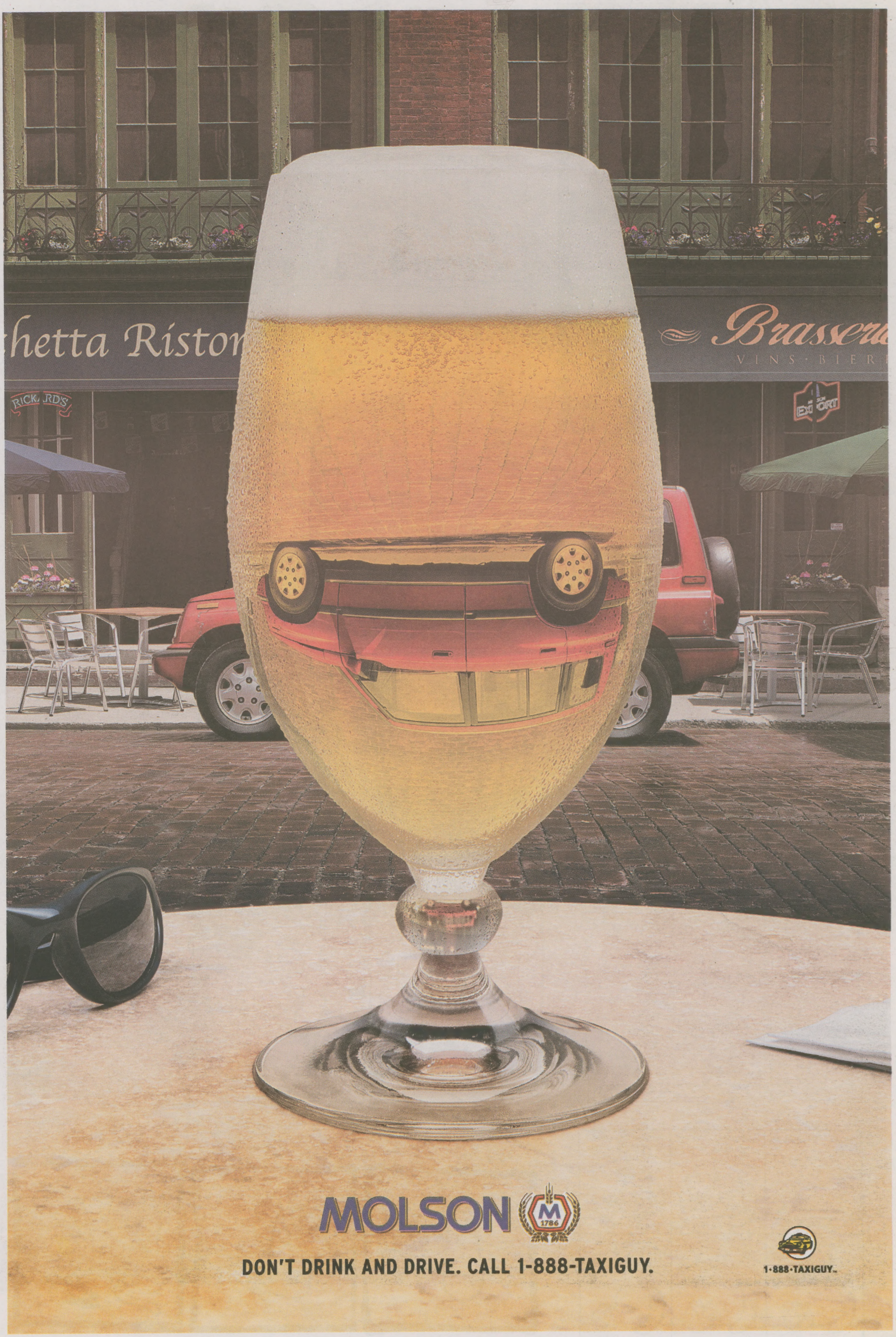
And How by Christina Lett


MAN, I HATE WALKING POGO IN THE MORNING. THE GARBAGE TRUCK ALWAYS FOL-LOWS US.
SO CHANGE YOUR ROUTE.
I GUESS I COULD...
YEAH! I'LL COME WITH YOU TOMORROW MORNING AND WE'LL FIND SOMEWHERE NICE.
JESUS!
I KNEW THIS WAS A BAD IDEA!
VRRRR

Comedy Salad by Jeff Moen


And so what did you tell him?
I was all like, "GO PEEL YOURSELF!"
Isn't that kind of like asking him to take his clothes off?
Huh.
Yeah.
Well, either way he won't be bothering you again.

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